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LETTERS AND WRITINGS
OF
MARIE LATASTE,

Superior of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart.

WITH
CRITICAL AND EXPOSITORY NOTES BY TWO FATHERS
OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

Translated from the French

BY
EDWARD HEALY THOMPSON, M.A.

"*Declaratio sermonum tuorum illuminat, et dat intellectum parvulis.*"
Psalm cxviii. 130.

VOL. III.

LONDON: BURNS & OATES, LIMITED.
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present volume, which contains the hitherto unpublished translation of the sixty remaining Letters of Marie Lataste, entitled "Biographical Letters," was also left by my husband in MS. ready for the press. In the advertisement prefixed by me to the second volume of "Letters and Writings," I explained what had caused the delay in publication. I need only here add that a considerable number of passages in these "Biographical Letters" have been already quoted in the "Life of Marie Lataste," for the completeness and illustration of which they were needed. This "Life," which formed the sixth volume of my dear husband's "Library of Religious Biography," I beg to remind the reader, is "in no sense a translation, but an original work, the result, indeed, of a patient study of existing materials, but constructed on other and independent lines." See "Notice" prefixed to the first volume of the "Letters and Writings of Marie Lataste," published in 1881.

HARRIET D. M. HEALY THOMPSON.

Feast of the Assumption, 1894.

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LETTERS
BIOGRAPHICAL.

LETTER I.

Marie gives her director an account of her family, her childhood, her first communion, and the favours she had received from the Saviour Jesus. She describes her rule of life.*

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

Acknowledging you, as I do, as my pastor, my father in Christ, and the director of my soul in the ways of salvation, I desire, before all, to offer you those sentiments of respect, obedience, and gratitude which you have every right to expect from me.

It is as your child, and as a soul entrusted to your charge, that I come, according to your desire, to lay open my heart to you, and make known to you its most hidden secrets. God grant that it be for His greater glory, and my own salvation! It will be

* The Abbé Pierre Darbins, Curé of Mimbaste, a village not far from Dax, in the *département* of the Landes. It was with him that Marie Lataste deposited her writings, which at her death were arranged and published in accordance with the directions communicated to her by the Saviour Jesus. The volumes were edited under his immediate superintendence, by his nephew, the Abbé Pascal Darbins; to whom also, shortly before his death, in 1867, he formally delivered over the custody of the manuscripts.

easier thereafter for you to guide me in the good way, and to give me your wise counsels and paternal advice. I will speak to you, therefore, with the simplicity of a poor girl, and without disguise.

I was born at Mimbaste, in that parish to which the will of Heaven has just been pleased to call you. My family is not rich in the goods of this world, but they love God, they practise their religion, and work for their livelihood. My education was not brilliant ; I never had any other instructor but my mother, who, knowing little, taught me what she knew herself, and so what I learned was little. I can read and write : that is all. As it was necessary that I should assist my parents, as far as I was able, in providing for my subsistence, my mother taught me also to sew and spin, that I might occupy myself and not remain idle. She did not neglect to teach me the chief truths of salvation ; and she taught me with a singular patience, which proves, as I now see, that her greatest desire was that I should be a good Christian, a faithful servant of God. Poor mother ! what trouble I gave her by often refusing to listen to her, or to learn and study the first book put into my hands, the catechism.

I became more submissive and more attentive at the time of my first communion. When I had the happiness of approaching Jesus for the first time, I knew all my catechism. I was twelve years old ; I was confirmed in the church of Pouillon shortly after. When I was between thirteen and fourteen, I became very scrupulous. I experienced very violent, and almost continual temptations against chastity. My soul was harassed with trouble, weariness and dryness. I found consolation nowhere : neither in God, nor in my mother, who suffered from my suffering, which she

perceived but could not understand. My sister Marguerite alone was like a consoling angel, whom Heaven had placed near me ; but, ignorant as she was of what was passing within me, how could she, notwithstanding all her love for me, give me the support I needed?

God was seeking to fashion my heart by these terrible trials at so tender an age. He inspired me with sentiments of disinclination for the world ; He taught me the danger of yielding to my passions, and daily augmented in me the love of virginity. Virginity offered to my mind an indescribable secret charm, which attached me to it and made me fear to lose it. This struggle against my passions, this dread, and this trouble lasted a long time. My anxiety to preserve my precious treasure of purity increased continually, and at length, God helping me, the day arrived on which my director, M. l'Abbé Forbas, allowed me to make a vow of chastity for a year. This vow I renewed, with his permission, yearly. From that time the trouble and disquiet of my soul much diminished. But I found little consolation in prayer and in the frequentation of the sacraments. I communicated every month, and every time I felt quite weighed down with sadness.

I was no longer afflicted with temptations against purity, but the struggle did not cease for all that. I was seventeen in 1839, and then all the other passions of my soul seemed to awake within me and to assail me with all their might. The pride of my childhood seemed to rise again, stronger and more powerful than ever, and my heart was embittered with anger as with gall, so that I felt quite distracted and ready to die every moment. My sensibility and susceptibility

became extreme : a word, a look, a gesture, a mere nothing, would displease me in others and put me out of patience. What I suffered, and what a life I led, at this time, not knowing what to do or which way to turn myself !

Oh, the Providence and the Mercy of God ! This loving Father cast a look of compassion upon me, He had pity on my wretchedness, He attracted my heart to the Divine Sacrament of the Altar. He took it and bound it so firmly to Himself that it was no longer easy for me to wander from Him ; I mean in thought. Sleeping or waking, working or not, alone or in company, conversing with God or with men, my mind and my heart remained near Jesus, I should have thought myself lost if I had strayed away from Him even for a moment. How many pains, torments, tribulations, sufferings of all kinds, did I experience even then ! But I was with Jesus, and it was a happiness for my soul to suffer in His presence, and to offer myself to Him as a victim, when I beheld Him a victim of love for me in His Eucharist.

I must tell you the truth : the Saviour Jesus has loaded me with His most signal favours in this Sacrament. He has manifested Himself to me in the reality of His Divine Humanity, He has kept me on my knees at His feet, but sometimes also He has not permitted me to approach Him. Thus He has made His very favours a trial to my soul. One of the happiest results of these relations with Him is my deliverance from my interior enemies and the dominion He has given me over them. How would it have fared with me otherwise ? New enemies were preparing to assail me from without.

These new enemies were the world and the dangers

which are to be met with at every step: the world and the snares it lays for souls; the world and the baits it offers to our exterior senses. My life, I suppose, is like the life of all other souls, an unceasing conflict, a daily labour. I do not complain of my lot, for God has, perhaps, bestowed more favours on me than on any one; He has conducted and guided me to this very day with a love quite paternal, even when tribulation and peril were at their worst. What to me is hardest to bear is to find myself at times all alone with myself, almost abandoned by God, with no strength, no vigour, no courage, no hope, no feeling, and environed with enemies, interior and exterior, who attack me with all the more boldness because I seem to be full of weakness and unable to resist them. Then it is that I am most afflicted; everything alarms me, opposes me, repels me, renders my life wearisome, unsupportable, ever fearful as I am of offending God, the best of fathers, and of displeasing Jesus, whom I love with all my heart and would desire to love for ever.

Jesus is the happiness of my life in my trouble and distress; I say it, and it is the truth. How, in fact, should He not render me happy, seeing that at the moment when I might be tempted to believe all to be lost, He draws nigh to me, and shows Himself to my enemies, who flee away in dismay, like children at the sight of a terrible giant?

Jesus is the happiness of my life in my trouble and distress; I say it, and it is the truth. How, in fact, should He not render me happy, since at the sight of my soul afflicted, desolated, affrighted, stricken down and crushed by temptation, reduced to the last gasp by my enemies, tortured with remorse of conscience

which reproaches me with the evil I have done, the good I have not done, the abuse or the fruitlessness of the graces He has given me—this, it is true, often befalls me without sufficient cause ; on account of my scruples, those black clouds in which the demon enshrouds me and which prevent my discovering the truth and its accomplishment—at this sight, I say, I see Him approach, bringing peace, calmness and tranquillity to my whole being?

Jesus is the happiness of my life in my trouble and distress ; I say it, and it is the truth. How, in fact, should He not render me happy, seeing that He manifests Himself to me as the only true good, the possession of which is promised to fidelity, the only Being who can satisfy the immensity of my desires and of my insatiable thirst for happiness and bliss? Happiness and bliss are to be found in Jesus alone. To possess Jesus at once and for ever, willingly would I give my life, willingly would I see it wither and shrivel up and perish in its springtide, in order to hasten my perpetual union with this Friend so devoted, this Father so loving, this Spouse so tender, this Saviour so compassionate, this God so holy and so perfect.

To die and possess Jesus—to die and leave the stormy sea of life in order to enter the haven—to die and go far away from this sad place of exile to our true country, which is Heaven—to die and see God—to die and know God—to die and love God through all eternity—this is now my ambition, and the dearest desire of my heart. Oh ! who will give me to see that happy, that blessed, day, when my soul shall be separated from my body and be united with Jesus? Then shall I be plunged in the immense charity of God ;

here, on earth, I feel myself drowned in the immensity of my pride and self-love. Pride is in my soul, it seeks to rule it, to bring it into bondage, to become master of it. Proud creature! who, then, am I? Who am I, to believe myself to be anything, and not to remember every instant that I hold all from Jesus, from His mercy, from His goodness, and His love? What a labour it is to repress pride, that mortal enemy of my soul, of my repose, and of my peace!

I will describe to you now my rule of life.

In the morning, on rising, I transport myself in spirit before the Blessed Sacrament; I offer to Jesus my heart and all my actions during the day. I have no fixed time for either getting up or going to bed. I rise in the morning when my parents do, or as soon as I awake. I lie down to rest in the evening when all has been well set to rights in the house, when no more work remains to be done, and I feel the need of taking the rest necessary for restoring my strength.

Every day, on rising, according as I have the time, I make half an hour's meditation, for which I prepare myself by vocal prayer. In the course of the day, I read some devout book, I say the Rosary, thrice I repeat seven times the *Gloria Patri*, as being a member of the Confraternity of the Most Holy Trinity, besides offering some prayers to the Blessed Virgin, as member of the Confraternity of the Scapular. All these different pious exercises I perform at the first leisure time I have in the day. In the evening I make my prayer, my examination of conscience, and a spiritual communion to unite myself to Jesus. I also make a spiritual communion in the morning, after rising, and sometimes during the day. At midday, I cast an eye back on the morning, in order to unite

myself still more closely to God until the evening, that I may avoid offending Him and may love Him from my inmost heart.

I fast twice in the week ; once in honour of Mary, and again in honour of the suffering Heart of Jesus. I do this, however, only with the permission of my director.

This is how I make my meditation : I place myself in the presence of God by transporting myself to the foot of the Holy Altar. I dwell on some circumstance of the Passion. After some reflections and affections I hear the word of Jesus, I hear it usually with pleasure and delight ; I say *usually*, for my negligence is so great that I do not always give it due attention.

It is nearly two years since He made me hear His voice, and showed me the vanity of earthly things ; the madness and the misery of those who attach themselves thereto ; the solidity of eternal goods ; the happiness of serving God, and the necessity of dedicating ourselves entirely to Him. He discoursed to me of the Unity of the Three Divine Persons, of the greatness, the power, the sanctity, the mercy and the sovereign perfection of God. He made me understand, so far as I was able, the intensity of the sufferings He endured in His Passion ; He explained to me the different mysteries. He gave me a glimpse of the intimate union which exists between the mysteries of His life and those of the life of the Blessed Virgin ; the admirable relations which subsist between God, angels, and men. He explained to me the principal truths of salvation and religion ; He showed me the different means He has given us for our salvation ; and every time He opens His mouth

to speak to me my soul finds in it fresh nourishment to sustain it in its advance towards the truth. What good advice, what loving counsels He gives me ! With what kindness, what tenderness He consoles me ; with what constancy He teaches me on all occasions to bear my cross ; with what sweetness He reproaches me, and with what firmness He corrects whatever is defective in me ; with what persuasive words He engages me to renounce my own will, to die to my inclinations, to combat my senses, to do everything in order to please God, to do nothing for the world, but, on the contrary, to do everything from love to His Father, who reigns in Heaven !

When He has traced out a line of conduct for me, I am always fearful of swerving from it. Sometimes I do so ; immediately He reproaches me and admonishes me to be more faithful for the future.

For some time He has ceased to reproach me with anything, and treats me with increased gentleness, affection and familiarity. He continues to instruct and enlighten me ; moreover, He tranquillises my mind, calms my agitation, dispels what might disturb my peace, warns me when it is the devil who is seeking to trouble me, and forbids me to listen to his voice. He invites me to abandon myself to His Providence, to cast myself into His arms with the confidence of a child, and deposit all my troubles and afflictions in His Heart. Then He speaks to me of the most beautiful virtues, He makes known to me their nature and effects, He exhorts me to cherish them in my heart when God has planted them there, and to merit them, if I have not yet acquired them, by an increase of fervour.

In the midst of these sweet relations with the Saviour,

I am not free from fears and apprehensions. I often ask myself if all this may not be the effect of my imagination, or an artifice of the devil, and whether or no I ought to yield my belief to it. Then He encourages me, and assures me that there is no illusion, and bids me tell all to my director and abide by his judgment. I have often done so, but without entering into many details. He urges me now more strongly than ever, since you have been amongst us, to make everything known to you and do whatever you shall enjoin me.

You have asked me to make you acquainted with my past life ; and I have given it you here ; so far, at least, as I remember and know it myself.

I am forgetting to tell you that the Saviour Jesus has several times said to me that He destines me for the religious life, and has hidden designs regarding me. May His will be accomplished ; my desire is to endeavour to offer no obstacle thereto.

I ought also to inform you that for almost a year I have communicated every fortnight. I had a desire to approach the Holy Eucharist more frequently, but I constantly stifled it, thinking that the wish proceeded perhaps from my self-love. The desire, however, became so strong four or five months ago, that I prayed the Saviour to make known to me the truth about it. "My daughter," He said, "I not only desire but I command you to communicate every week. I am calling you to live a more perfect life, and it is by My sacraments that you will attain this perfection." From that moment the desire vanished. But Jesus spoke to me again in like manner, bidding me inform my director of His will and abide by what he should say. He made me great promises if I should open my heart

to him who then directed me, and threatened me severely if I should abuse the favours He granted me or neglect them through any fault of my own.

I spoke to my confessor, whose reply was in accord with the words of the Saviour Jesus ; namely, that He considered I possessed the necessary, or sufficient, dispositions for communicating every week, but continuing to confess only once a fortnight. Such was my practice when Providence removed my first director from this parish, and sent you in his place. I have continued since to communicate every week.

Ah, monsieur ! I well know that my very profession as a Christian obliges me to lead a perfect life, but I will not conceal from you that I am very far from this perfection. My weakness is very great, my enemies are powerful, my path is beset with innumerable dangers, I tremble for my salvation, unless God should bestow upon me very special and particular graces. I beg and entreat you to ask of God those graces which I need ; assuredly you will do so, since He has constituted you my spiritual father. For myself, as being your child, I will beg God, in the humility of my soul, to pour down His abundant blessings on him whose sublime ministry causes them to descend daily on this whole parish. May God bless both the flock and the pastor, and may the pastor take pity on me, the most wretched sheep of his flock.

Forgive, I pray you, this disconnected letter ; I never had any other education except what I received from my mother, a poor orphan, who has often told me that she never went to school after she was ten years old. I trust in your great and indulgent kindness to take in good part the simplicity with which I have spoken to you. I have written this letter at

night, in haste, and as I was able, in order to prevent observation.

Receive, I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my high consideration ; with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble and respectful servant,

MARIE LATASTE.

MIMBASTE, 13th February, 1842.

LETTER II.

Marie's devotion to the Blessed Sacraments. She sees Jesus for the first time. He teaches her. Three kinds of prayer.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I have nothing hidden from you ; you are the director of my soul, and you ought to be its master. I would wish, in a manner, to renounce the proprietorship of my soul in order to give it up to you. I do not know in what way I ought to guide it, but you know. Ah ! if I could but take my soul and say to you, I leave it in your hands, do with it what you will ; command it, it will obey you ; dispose of it as though it were your own soul ; I wish it to do nothing except what you wish, because you never wish anything but the will of God. In following your injunctions, and executing your orders, I shall not be deceived ; but, abandoned to myself, what will become of me ? What is it that is passing within me ? Whither am I going ? Am I in the hands of God, or the victim of the delusions of Satan transformed into an angel of light ? It is for you alone to enlighten

me ; it is you alone who must guide me ; you alone who must keep me in the good way, if I am therein, and withdraw me from the bad way, if I am hurrying on towards the abyss. You are my father, the good angel of my soul ; be, then, my protector and my guide ; I give myself up to you. I abide in myself only that I may walk as you wish, and act according as you will.

I have spoken to you of the favours which, it seems to me, I have received from the Saviour Jesus. Now, among the greatest He has shown me, I reckon that of having attracted my mind and my heart to the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. The Tabernacle of Jesus is the place to which I love to retire, there to hide myself and take my repose. There I find a life which I cannot define, a joy which I cannot intelligibly express, a peace the like of which is not to be met with under the hospitable roofs of the dearest friends. The Tabernacle of Jesus is a shelter to me against all my enemies ; against the devil, against the world, against my passions, against my ill-regulated inclinations ; it is my support in weakness, my consolation in sorrow, my weapon in conflict, my refreshment in heat, my food in hunger, my recreation in fatigue, a very Heaven on earth. The Tabernacle of Jesus is my riches in poverty, my treasure in want, my clothing in nakedness, my crown in affliction. The Tabernacle of Jesus is my God and my All, my Jesus and my Saviour. O Tabernacle of my God ! O God of the Tabernacle of the Altar ! O Altar of the Tabernacle of my God !

What was my happiness on that day when I felt my soul illuminated by a light altogether interior, and my whole being drawn towards the Holy Sacra-

ment of the Altar ! I could not resist this attraction. My feet carried me thither, so to say, naturally and without effort. I observed nothing on the way ; I saw neither gardens, nor fields, nor meadows, neither men nor women,—nothing but the Tabernacle in all places, everywhere. I walked, but believed myself to be before the Tabernacle. I did not behold it with the eyes of the body, but with those of the soul. At last I entered the church, O joy, O happiness, O bliss ! I beheld Jesus on the altar surrounded by His angels. I beheld Him, however, only in an indistinct way. It seemed to me that an imperceptible cloud prevented my seeing Him as He was.

Thus it was that I was drawn nearer to Him : as my heart attached itself more and more closely to Him, so my eyes also beheld Him more and more clearly. I remained bashfully in a corner of the church, still looking on Jesus, but not venturing to approach Him. Then He advanced towards me, called me benignantly by my name, and blessed me. Now I beheld Him distinctly. A brighter light was suffused around me. I beheld Jesus in the form and stature of a man, full of majesty and sweetness. He breathed only love, benignity, and tenderness.

From that moment the society of men has never ceased to be displeasing to me ; I should wish to fly from them for ever and shut myself up in the Tabernacle with Him. I should have wished to abide always with Him ; but when He disappeared from my eyes, when I no longer beheld His light, I took my heart, enclosed it in the Tabernacle, and withdrew.

One day Jesus appeared to me as He was wont ; He called me to His tabernacle ; then, all of a sudden, the splendour of His light disappeared, and I heard

His voice saying to me, "Withdraw, My daughter." I withdrew with pain and sorrow in my heart. For several days together I returned, but I no longer beheld Him. How grievously I suffered from this deprivation of the sight of Jesus ! I said to myself, "It is your sins which have made you lose this favour"; and I humbled myself before the Lord, offering to Him, as an expiation of my sins and iniquities, my perfect submission to all His desires.

Some time afterwards, however, I perceived Jesus on the altar. The priest was offering the Holy Mass. "My daughter," said the Saviour to me after the Communion, "remain at the rails; you must never approach nearer unless I direct you to do so." * "Lord," I replied, "I will ever do Thy will." Immediately, in order to try me, He drove me from the church; I remained without on my knees, waiting until He should be pleased to admit me again. After a good space of time He called me, and permitted me to prostrate myself at His feet and embrace them.

For about a year my place was at the railing. I had not the right to advance further. Only sometimes Jesus manifested Himself to me in my heart, which then became to me like a magnificent temple,

* After quoting this passage in her life, the author observes that some of Marie's visions were not external to her, but belonged to what is called the imaginary class; "the two kinds seeming often to pass one into the other. When she speaks of remaining at the rails of the sanctuary, it is evident that we are not to understand her as being commanded by our Lord to kneel always there; this would have been an act of singularity; still less can we interpret in a literal sense the direction to advance within the sanctuary. She moved in spirit to these different places, and often beheld Jesus within her own heart, to which, as if it were something apart from herself, she seemed to be admitted."—*Life of Marie Lataste*, pp. 27, 28.

the entrance to which was never forbidden me. I saw Him as really as I do in the church, and I offered to Him my acts of homage and adoration. There was in my heart an altar, a tabernacle, a throne, and a railing. The altar was of gold, the tabernacle of gold, the throne of gold, the railing of gold. There was also a magnificent lamp, the light of which was more brilliant than that of the sun. My angel guardian used to light it before Jesus entered into my heart.

It was during this first year in which Jesus called me to Him, or kept me at a distance from Him, in which He manifested Himself or hid Himself from my eyes, that I learned how to make my meditation. It was He Himself who taught me how to meditate; and He taught me three different ways at three different times and places.

At the beginning, or, rather, when He ordered me to remain near the railings, as though to compensate me for not being able to approach nearer to Him, He taught me the first mode of meditation. "My daughter," He said to me, "I have Myself given the first example to men, in order that they might act as I acted. I am an example to you, as I am to all men. Look at Me, and desire to follow in My steps. Think of My humble and private life at Nazareth; of My public life in Judea and Galilee; of My Passion and of My Death. Contemplate My life as a picture, and reproduce this picture in yourself by the desire of your heart and of your soul." It was thus I began to learn how to meditate. I considered the life of Jesus, and prayed God to give me grace to copy it as perfectly as possible, according to my age and condition.

But some time afterwards I entirely lost sight of this manner of meditating, and remained before the

Saviour like a being devoid of reason and intellect. I begged Jesus to come to my aid, to assist me, and teach me how to meditate. Light broke in upon my mind through the Saviour's words, and He taught me a more perfect method of prayer.

This is how I meditated from that day: I began by preparing myself at the foot of the altar, to which I transported myself in spirit. I banished every irrelevant thought, and penetrated myself with the presence of God and with the subject of my meditation. Usually I selected some circumstance of the Passion, and when I had viewed everything as though I had been present at it, I returned to the altar, near to Jesus, to form my affections* and present them to Him. This done, I implored Him to pour His graces into my soul, and finished my meditation. I am forgetting to say that I always transported myself in spirit either to the Garden of Olives, to the Prætorium, to Calvary, or to the Sepulchre hewn in the rock.

I followed this method for nearly a year. The Saviour Jesus taught it me one day when He permitted me to pass beyond the railing and go up to the altar, where He was seated on His throne.

One day I found the Saviour Jesus in my heart. He looked all smiling. I knelt before Him saying: "I love Thee, Lord; take pity on Thy humble servant." At that moment He taught me a new way of making my meditation. It seems to be the most perfect of

* Meaning those acts which in meditation are technically called *affections*, or sentiments of divine love, desire, admiration, compunction, thanksgiving, etc. See Book VI. Section 9. Marie was afterwards raised to a higher state of prayer, which, as she says (Letter XXXIII.), was a simple elevation of her mind to God, without considerations, reflections, resolutions, or affections.

the three, and it is the one I have practised ever since.

This is the way in which I make my meditation in accordance with the fresh instructions given me by my Saviour: I commence by placing myself in the presence of God by acts of faith and adoration; I excite in myself sentiments of humility and contrition. I unite myself to Jesus by the most ardent love of my heart. My mind being thus united to the Saviour, I raise it up to God the Father, begging Him to send me the Holy Spirit to aid me in making my meditation. Then I converse with Jesus on some circumstances of His Life, His Passion, or His Death. I listen to His words, I receive the inspirations which the grace of God sends me, I take my heart and offer it to Jesus in thanksgiving for all He has done for me. I conclude my meditation by offering to God all the pains, all the contradictions, all the sufferings of my life in union with those of the life of Jesus; I present to Him all the merits of Jesus in expiation of my sins; I entreat Him to show me mercy, to grant me His grace, to take me as His child, and bless all my actions, and every moment of my life. Finally, casting myself at the feet of Jesus, I give myself anew to Him, praying Him to bless me, and watch over me.

All my meditations are not equally fruitful. I do not always experience the same attraction drawing me to Jesus. I am often devoid of sentiment and of love for Him. My indifference is beyond all expression. What a wretched, ungrateful sinner I am! How many reasons I have for humbling myself!

Pray for me, Monsieur le Curé, and have pity on your child. You know my misery and my nothingness. Assist me, help me, sustain me, guide me,

strengthen me, save me. I put myself into your hands, and renew to you the assurance of the profound respect with which I am,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE LATASTE.

MIMBASTE, 10th March, 1842.

LETTER III.

Marie makes her choice between Jesus and Satan.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

Here is what I experienced one Sunday before Holy Mass.

I heard the Saviour Jesus speaking to the faithful before the commencement of the Holy Sacrifice. He was showing them the vanity of earthly things and the emptiness of worldly pleasures. I did not lose a single one of His words. All of a sudden, He turned towards me, and said to me in a grave and very earnest tone, "To which side do you wish to belong? to that of the world and the devil or to that of your Saviour and your God? If you take part with the world and the devil, eternal misery awaits you; but you will escape it if you take My side. Under My banner you will have to endure all kinds of sufferings, tribulations, and conflicts, but the Cross will conduct you to Heaven. Choose!"

At that moment I was entirely abandoned to myself; God left me alone and perfectly mistress of my own will. For an instant I remained like one who is reflecting and deliberating; then a sweet attraction drew me towards God. It was an attraction which I

could not resist, and my will made the happy choice of declaring itself on the side of Jesus.

The Saviour then said to me, "My daughter, it is not sufficient to have ranged yourself on My side; you must never quit it, and remain always faithful to Me. Promise Me never to commit sin voluntarily and of deliberate purpose, and to avoid all circumstances which might draw you into sin." I was at that moment near the altar, for the Saviour had called me to Him. I did not feel the courage to make this promise. Then Jesus made it in my name: "I promise to avoid sin, however small it may be; and henceforward nothing shall induce me to commit it deliberately. I promise to be faithful to God. I take as witness of my promise the stone of this altar, on which Jesus Christ immolates Himself every day to expiate the sins of the world. Let this altar be the sensible monument of my promise, and let it recall it to my mind whenever my eyes shall rest upon it." Then, after hearing it from the lips of Jesus, I myself pronounced the promise.

"Finally, My daughter," He said to me, "you must promise never to be ashamed of belonging to Me." "Lord," I immediately replied, "with Thy grace I promise it with all my heart." "If this be so," He added, "always wear My Cross in sight, as a proof of the sincerity of your promise."

From that moment I have seemed to possess fresh strength and renewed vigour; from that moment I gave myself sincerely to God. I made this offering of myself through Jesus; and it is through Him that it is perpetuated.

Am I able to do anything of myself? No, no; I know that I am not, and so also do you. But I have

confidence in Jesus, and I abandon myself entirely to Him. Watch over my soul, watch over the daily life of your child, my revered father. Through you I shall abide with Jesus, and through Jesus I shall abide with God.

I pray God to grant you all the graces you need for yourself and for the direction of souls, especially of my own. I beg Him to bless you ; and do you pray much for a poor sinner like me.

I offer you, Monsieur le Curé, the expression of my most devoted sentiments.

Your humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 23rd March, 1842.

LETTER IV.

Marie's three solitudes.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

He who addresses me has thus spoken to me of solitude :—

“My daughter, I have chosen three solitudes for you ; and I have made them known to you by establishing you in them. The first is the home of your family, situated in a little village, removed from the tumult of great cities, and hence a true solitude, since you live in it unknown and under the eye of God. The second solitude is your parish church, to which you come in order to separate yourself from all that is not God, to adore Him, to pray to Him, to receive His graces and His gifts. The third solitude is your heart, an interior solitude, to which no one

shall ever have access, if you preserve it wholly for your Saviour, who desires to be alone its possessor and its sovereign. The others are exterior solitudes; this one alone is interior, hidden, veiled from all eyes; it is also more perfect than the two former. Solitude of the heart may be had without the first solitude; without retiring into a desert, without being enclosed in a cloister, or abiding in some secluded spot. Solitude of heart may be had without being present in a holy place, or in the sacred sanctuary; but the first two solitudes may be had without possessing solitude of heart.

“Vainly, in fact, My daughter, might you shut yourself up night and day in My temples: unless you possessed solitude of heart, you would not be solitary; vainly might you withdraw into the recesses of a desert, far from men and from the whole world: unless you possessed solitude of heart, that is, if your heart were not separated from what goes on in the world, from its feasting, its pleasures and its follies, if your heart were pre-occupied with the things of earth which pass and rapidly vanish, you would not be solitary. Whereas if you lived in the world, and were mixed up in the affairs of human life, you might be, and would be, truly solitary if your heart were in the world as if absent from it; because it would be completely detached from all and closely united to God.

“True solitude consists, then, in withdrawing from all that is on earth, from the world and from men, and drawing nigh to Heaven and to God. You cannot of yourself acquire solitude of heart. It is a gift of God; it suffices, however, to beg it of God, with a great desire to have it, in order to obtain and possess

it. God never refuses it, for He ardently desires that all should pass their life in solitude of heart. Exterior solitudes,—cloisters, monasteries, deserts, the holy place,—are as the way which leads to solitude of heart. How many souls are there who would never have possessed solitude of heart if they had not sought it in exterior solitudes! Nevertheless, since it may happen that a person may be unable to seek solitude of heart by means of exterior solitudes, God does not refuse it to such as find themselves thus circumstanced. Solitude of heart is a gift of God. God sends it in the manner that He pleases, and by the means which seem most efficacious to procure it: to wit, a great desire for this solitude, the constant efforts of the soul to abide in this solitude, detachment from the goods and from the turmoil of the world, fervent and continual prayer.

“I have given you three solitudes; the first has led you to the second. When any one is ignorant of the world, does not hear its conversation, is not disturbed by its feasting and amusements, then he knows God, hears His word, and lives in peace in His service. This soul knows God, and, in order to know Him better, frequents His temple and draws nigh to His altar; and so it comes into the second solitude which I have made known to you and which I have given you in the holy place: there the soul learns, by the reverence due to the Divine Majesty, to separate itself from all, to think only of that Majesty; and, when this thought becomes the one thought of the soul, then the soul is truly solitary. This temporary and transient solitude of the heart leads on to that which is abiding; because the soul learns very quickly that if the Church is the temple of God, and the

place where His presence ought to be venerated and specially adored, the universe is also the magnificent temple which God has built for Himself with His own hands, and which everywhere manifests His power and His glory. This is why the soul, seeing itself surrounded by God on every side, no longer thinks of anything save Him, and lives entirely solitary in its heart. Have you not experienced this, My daughter?

“A solitary soul has its eye constantly on itself, on its enemies, on God. It has its eye on itself: it is ever examining whether its life is a steady advance towards God; whether it corresponds to the gifts of God, whether its fervour increases or relaxes; it discerns the causes of any failings, and their motives, and takes measures for removing them. It has its eye upon its enemies: they never take it by surprise. Solitude is to this soul like an elevated spot, whence it overlooks the whole neighbourhood. Solitude is to this soul like a wary spy, who warns it of all the movements, all the ambushes, all the preparations of the devil, the world, and the passions. And so to this soul victory is no arduous achievement. Its enemies, seeing themselves discovered, generally decline the combat, and take to flight in shame and confusion. It has its eye on God, that it may execute His will in the smallest matters. God speaks to it, and, because it is solitary, it hears His voice, which penetrates into its heart. God bestows on it His graces, and, because it is solitary, it is ready to receive them, to profit by them, and to thank Him who confers them. God draws nigh to it, it receives Him eagerly and without delay, and between the Creator and the creature there is established an intimate familiarity,

which constitutes the happiness of the soul, and rejoices the heart of God, who is its father. All the greatest saints of Heaven have lived in this solitude of heart. This solitude was their delight; therein they found strength and courage for the battles of life, consolation in their afflictions and tribulations, light in their labours and apostolate, shelter against all dangers, and a sure and certain ascent towards eternal felicity.

“Solitude of heart is a thing which pleases Me, and which I love above everything. Through all eternity I have reposed, I do repose, and shall for ever repose, in the bosom of My Father, separated from all, to live only of the life of My Father and to receive no other life but His life. Solitude of heart in the life of souls is an image of the everlasting solitude which I find in the bosom of God, because I am His Word; and this is why I so much love solitude of heart. As the Word of God made Man, I have, like you, My daughter, had three solitudes: the solitude of My dwelling at Nazareth; the solitude of the world, which was the temple in which I adored God, My Father; and the solitude of My Heart, in which, from the commencement of My life unto My last sigh upon the cross, I offered to Him the sacrifice of reparation for the sin of man. My whole life was a life in solitude. I was solitary, that is, isolated from men, in My birth. I was solitary, that is, exiled and driven away by men, in My flight into Egypt. I was solitary, that is, unknown to men, separated from all worldly things, in My hidden life at Nazareth. I was solitary in the midst of My Apostles, who did not understand the things of God, and forsook Me in the face of My enemies. I lived forty days in the solitude of the desert. I often retired into soli-

tude, to pay My homage to God My Father. When I looked upon mankind, laden with crimes and in revolt against My Father, I found Myself solitary, that is, alone able to give adequate satisfaction to divine justice. The entire world was one immense solitude, and I was, as the prophet said, the pelican of this desert.

“My daughter, love solitude of heart; suffer yourself to be led by My grace into this solitude; embellish it with all My virtues; render it more and more worthy to receive Me. It is there that I will come to instruct you, to manifest truth to you, to teach you to know God and what is of God; it is there that I will lavish on you the treasures of My love and of My tenderness; it is there that I will allow you to have a glimpse of the felicity of Heaven, of which I will give you a foretaste. Solitude of heart will be for you the marvellous Ark of Noe, into which I would have you enter to save yourself from the stormy sea of the world. It is I who will guide this Ark, and it shall not rest on the mount of malediction and fear, but on that of benediction and charity.”

This, Monsieur le Curé, is what I heard. I beg you to believe that I am in no wise attached to my opinion. It seems to me that it was Jesus who addressed these words to me. It is, at least, some one who speaks in His Name. It will be easy for you to discern who it is who thus converses with me. I will submit myself, in all things and at all times, to your judgment and decisions.

Be pleased still to continue your kindly solicitude regarding me, and to aid me by your lights and your charitable counsels ever to love God and never to separate myself from Him.

Receive the assurance of my warmest gratitude, and of the sentiments of deepest respect, with which I am,

Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 3rd April, 1842.

LETTER V.

Effects produced on Marie by the sensible vision of Jesus. Her sentiments thereon.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

You have desired me to make known to you everything which has passed within me from the time that I have been permitted to pay my homage to Jesus Christ present before my eyes after a sensible manner. I will show myself to you without reserve, and I will at the same time manifest to you the dispositions of my soul. Forgive me if I am too lengthy in my recital; perhaps I shall tell you unnecessary things, but this will not be intentional, for I have only one desire, and that is to inform you of everything, and reveal to you everything which passed within me.

Until the day when it was given me to adore Jesus Christ sensibly present to my sight, I had lived only my child's life. When the Saviour Jesus appeared before my eyes the first time, I suddenly experienced within myself greater firmness, vigour, and courage; I felt myself more drawn towards God, more detached from the world, more at enmity with myself, more amenable to others, more severe to myself, and this

with scarcely any effort on my part. These dispositions of my soul increased every day, in proportion as my eyes more and more contemplated the Saviour, and my ears hearkened to His voice, and the darkness of my understanding was dissipated. I looked upon myself as a tree which the morning dew and the sunshine of the day render fruitful without any merit on its part ; and willingly would I have lived this life for a thousand years. God's thoughts are not like those of us poor creatures, who know not what is for our good, or what is most profitable for us. He deprived me of His sensible presence, and I sank into a state of weakness, languor, and cowardice. I was oppressed with fatigue, and could rest nowhere ; my heart was in a state of suffering, sadness, and continual impatience. I should easily have fallen into discouragement. I felt my passions and perverse inclinations raising their voices within me ; I dreaded losing my soul, and becoming the miserable victim of sin.

One day making an effort, I said to myself, "How cowardly and fearful I am ! Ah ! certainly God will not abandon me." I fell on my knees, and cried aloud to Heaven, "Lord, Thy will be done, and do Thou have pity on me." The Saviour Jesus was probably only waiting for this proof of my perfect resignation, for He did not delay to present Himself again to my eyes. What a beautiful soft light encompassed His throne and His person ! How happy I was again at that moment ! This light was reflected upon me, penetrated, illuminated, fortified me, and inflamed me with the love of God. Nevertheless, I had the resolution every day to say to Jesus : "Lord, I am ready to sacrifice the sweetness of Thy presence, if such be Thy pleasure."

He continues to manifest Himself to me, but soon I shall see Him no more ; this He has Himself announced to me. His will be done.

I wish also to make known to you my natural disposition. From my earliest infancy, I always felt myself attracted towards what was high, and far above anything to which I could aspire. I did not believe that I was made to lead an obscure life in a little village like Mimbaste. How often did I wish that I belonged to a rich and noble family, which could have given me a brilliant education, and thus facilitated for me the means of distinguishing myself ! But I hid all this in the depths of my heart, and communicated my thoughts to no one. I nourished these secret ideas in my soul, and suffered because they could not be realised. Such was the pride of my heart : I say this to you without disguise. How much correction did my interior need !

I do not know if the Saviour Jesus has completely modified by His grace what was defective in me. I know not if I may hope to continue always advancing towards perfection ; but it seems to me that the work of Jesus in me has not been in vain. I still love greatness, exaltation, glory, honour ; but it is the greatness of God, the exaltation of God, the glory of God, the honour of God. Formerly, I loved only myself, my own person, all that appertained to me ; now, I desire to love, and I do love, so it seems to me, God alone. I do not wish for riches ; God suffices me. I do not wish for fame ; my glory is to live unknown and hidden in the most amiable Heart of Jesus. A throne, a crown, would not tempt me, and I should prefer the poverty of Jesus, the cross of Jesus, the thorny crown of Jesus, the service of Jesus,

to everything of the kind here below. Never were my heart, my mind, my soul more attached to God and more devoted to Him than at this present; never have I more loved the virtues which my Saviour has taught me to know; never have I more loved my vocation; never have I more hated the world. As for the world, I have hated it, and with my whole heart, I might say nearly all my life.

At first, I hated the world because it was impossible for me to love it; but if I had possessed those things which are necessary to make it an object of love—I say this to my shame—I should have loved it, miserable creature that I was, because I did not know it. I hated the world, then, because it mortified my self-love. The world requires an easy deportment, and, because I was timid, I hated the world; the world loves wit and intelligence, and, because I was ignorant and stupid, I hated the world; the world esteems riches, and, because I was poor, I hated the world. I had nothing which was requisite to fit me for the world, and so I said within my heart, “Hatred to the world, which despises you and tramples you under foot!” This hatred was not good; it had no other foundation but my self-love. Later, I still hated the world; I had become disgusted with it on account of the numerous obstacles which I found in it to the working out my salvation, and the many dangers which are to be met with at every step; so I desired to separate myself from it in order to live more united to God, and to save my soul with more facility.

At the present time, if I desire to enter religion, it is not from the fear of losing my soul—I believe that the grace of God will be always with me—but solely to divest myself of everything, in order to give all

to God, and to love Him uninterruptedly and for ever.

What will my future be? I know not. I feel in myself new energies, which are strange to me, and which I cannot explain. May God take pity on me! I pray Him to be pleased to make me such as He would have me to be; I abandon myself to His Providence; let Him dispose of me according to His holy will. I have but one desire—to love Him, and to love Him ever; to follow and fulfil, as completely and as perfectly as I am able, His holy will. I feel ready to do whatever is pleasing to Him and whatever He shall ask of me, whether personally or through you, who are His minister and His representative to me. Nevertheless, I know that of myself I can do nothing, but that I can do everything with His grace, which will strengthen me, and which He will not refuse me.

I know that you pray for me: continue to pray, pray without ceasing for your child. I shall never be able to show my gratitude for your goodness; but the Lord, who is my support and my riches, will recompense you abundantly. I beg this of Him every day.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, I pray you, my most dutiful respects, and the assurance of my highest consideration.

Your very humble, very grateful, and very obedient

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, *12th April*, 1842.

LETTER VI.

Our Lord's dealings with Marie.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

You desire to know how the Saviour Jesus comports Himself towards me in the relations which He has been pleased to establish between us. I will comply with your request as simply as I can, telling you everything without concealment, in order that you may be able to form a judgment, and to show me what I ought to do, so that I may be preserved from illusion and walk in the truth.

The Saviour Jesus is full of kindness to me; He has given me, and often gives me, testimonies of His love of which I confess myself unworthy, but which I would sincerely wish to try and deserve. Well, it seems to me that He assists me in this present disposition of my heart by treating me and acting towards me according to the needs of my soul. One while He is all gentleness to attract me to Him; at another He shows great firmness, which, indeed, is very necessary in order that I may conform myself to the examples which He gave me during His life and the words which He addresses to me in His converse with me. Sometimes He is severe with me; and I deserve that He should be so more frequently.

One day my mind was in a very dissipated state, my heart was full of indifference, and I listened to the words of Jesus without the reverence which was due to them. Then I saw His countenance become grave, and He fixed His eyes upon me. He paused, and said to me in a tone of anger, "Who are you to receive with so much negligence the words which I speak to

you? Daughter, full of pride, do you well know yourself? You are only nothingness, sin and corruption, and it is thus that you hearken to My words! Do you imagine that it is on account of any merits of your own that I come to converse with you? It is from My pure mercy alone that I come to teach you. This instruction is in no way your due. Beware of despising it, beware of valuing yourself upon it, beware of elevating yourself on that account above others. My word alone will not save you; your co-operation is needed. My word will not impart merit to you; your merit will be in corresponding with what it tells you. My word must not return to Me void. What I say to you would suffice to convert millions of idolaters. Woe to you if you derive no profit from it! Know that you ought always to humble yourself before Me; for you are but dust and ashes, sin and corruption, and Jesus is God all-powerful, God infinitely perfect, God thrice holy, the Saint of saints, Sanctity Itself. I make kings; I cause monarchs and rulers to tremble on their thrones. I prove the heart and the reins; nothing which men do escapes My sight; I know their most secret thoughts. Be faithful to Me, then, and give Me your attention." It was thus the Saviour Jesus addressed me, in a tone of severity which pierced my inmost heart. He speaks to me in this way whenever He deems it good and opportune for the salvation of my soul.

At other times I do not venture to approach Him; my heart is oppressed with trouble, with dread, with suffering, discouragement, and sadness. Then the Saviour Jesus comes to me with the kindness, the sweetness, and the tenderness of a father. "Come, My child," He says to me; "come to Me trustfully; raise

up your heart. I am your father, love Me as My child. Speak to Me with confidence, fear nothing, disclose your sorrows to Me, and I will dispel them. Come to Me, I will change your troubles into joy, your sighs and groans into songs of gladness. Your sufferings and tribulations will pass away ; they are but for a time, and in Heaven you will find only happiness and bliss." Then joy revisits my soul ; it seems to me as if I were drawing with abundance from the Heart of Jesus as from a well, or as if from His lips a refreshing dew were descending, which quenched my thirst and penetrated my whole being.

Thus it is, Monsieur le Curé, that the Saviour Jesus acts in regard to me, correcting everything that is defective in me, making me know my evil inclinations, and showing me the means of combating them. It is thus that He consoles me in sorrow, supports me in weakness, affords me help in need. It is thus that He loads me with the most signal favours, that He instructs me, and teaches me to understand the holy truths of salvation.

How grateful I ought to be for all His favours, and yet how little I am so ! Ah ! my father, thank the Saviour for me ; lend me the aid of your heart, for mine is so ungrateful. Thank Jesus for me, and tell Him that I desire to love Him always.

I am, with the deepest respect, Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 24th April, 1842.

LETTER VII.

Visions premonitory of suffering.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I wish to relate to you some extraordinary things which occur to me at this moment; you will think what you please about them.

One Sunday, at the beginning of Mass, the Saviour Jesus made me repeat the *Confiteor* and the Act of Contrition. After this, He gave me absolution of all my sins. Then He said, "Let a robe dyed in the chalice of My Blood be brought hither, a veil dipped in the water of the Divinity,* and a crown wrought by the Holy Ghost Himself. I wish her to be clothed to-day as one of the princesses of Heaven." His orders were obeyed. There were brought a red robe, a veil of dazzling brightness, and a crown of white flowers, the like to which I have never seen. When I was arrayed therein, my face, and my hands, and feet became of a shining whiteness, and Jesus made me sit on a low seat by His side. I had a golden girdle round my loins, and I felt unspeakably happy. At the Elevation I heard the Saviour address some words to the faithful, and tell them that it was for love of them He had descended from Heaven to dwell on the altar, and in the tabernacle.

After communion I opened the little door of my heart, which was like a small chamber, very fair and pleasant; Jesus entered therein, and seated Himself on the throne of which I have already spoken. I remained there, near Jesus, with my guardian angel

* 1 John v. 6-8.

and the Blessed Virgin, who had entered in with us. I remained thus arrayed the whole day, abiding in the interior of my heart.

Another day I was assailed by a violent temptation against purity. I did not know whither to flee for shelter from its attacks. I took refuge, in spirit, in the hall where Jesus was crowned with thorns. I beheld Him in that condition, holding a reed in His hand and mocked by the soldiers. While I was intently contemplating the Saviour, the temptation ceased. Then the soldiers turned towards me, and, taking the reed from the hands of Jesus, they presented it to me that I might strike Him as they had done. I refused to do their will; immediately they began to blaspheme, and to insult me, because I acknowledged Jesus to be God. "Fool!" they said to me; "who has taught you such nonsense? your life is in our hands; strike Him or you die." "Do with me what you will," I answered; "I shall not obey you." Forthwith they had me denounced to the governor; they bound me with chains—not, however, very roughly—and cast me into a dark, deep dungeon. They left my hands and feet free, but they passed a long chain round my waist and fastened it to a post. A lamp whose light was nearly out hung from the vaulted roof. Soon the door was closed, and I remained alone. I fell on my knees to pray. A morsel of bread and a little water were put in, to serve me as food for the day. I do not know how I was set at liberty.*

Another time I had also enjoyed the happiness of

* This vision, like the former, is evidently parabolical. The former represented the glory of suffering with Jesus; the latter invites her to unite her sufferings with those of the Passion.

communicating. My heart was such as I have described, and I retired into it with Jesus and my guardian angel. Soon I perceived around my heart a dark, deep ditch, though everything else remained as I have said. This sight saddened me. "You are pained at what you behold, My daughter," the Saviour said to me: "here is the interpretation. For the space of a year you will be like one shut up in a dungeon, where you will be made to undergo a thousand interrogations, and where menaces and promises will be employed to shake your constancy.* Be not troubled, however; your pains and your tribulations will be alleviated by the sweetness and the power of My grace."

In fine, one day, when making my meditation, I beheld Jesus all transported with joy while He was speaking to me. I evinced surprise thereat. "Ah," said He, "if you knew what I am thinking of at this moment!" "What is it, then, Lord?" I answered. "My daughter, it is your martyrdom; you will mingle your blood with Mine. How I long, My daughter, to contract this alliance with you!" Now, at this moment, I was in my heart with Jesus and my guardian angel. I felt drawn to descend into the dark, deep ditch, and I yielded to the attraction. Then I felt utterly bewildered, and I cried out several times: "Lord, where am I?" At last I reached the bottom, and saw a person engaged in writing; soldiers came and said to her: "What writing is this?" She made no reply. It was a letter, which she folded and

* Allusion is here made to the trying ordeal to which she was subjected by her directors, and the efforts used to turn her away from her vocation. See *Life of Marie Lataste*, Chapter X.; where also will be found an explanation of the way in which she may be said to have suffered martyrdom.

gave to another person who was near her, that she might transmit it to its address. The soldiers took her with them, and led her into a vast hall. She prayed while she passed along. I followed her. On coming into the presence of a judge, he asked her who she was. "I am a Christian," she replied. "Whence come you?" "I am a Christian." "Renounce your religion, which the law condemns." "I am a Christian, and for ever." "I will have your head cut off." "What matter? Jesus is my strength." "I will make you suffer every manner of torment." "Jesus is my strength." "I will have you burned alive." "Jesus is my strength." "Renounce your religion, and you shall be rich and happy." "Jesus is all my treasure." Then the judge pronounced sentence, as I think, in these terms: "We condemn Marie to death for refusing to renounce a religion which the law forbids." The soldiers took her and led her away to execution. I followed with a joyful heart. "This, then," I said to myself,—*"this is what awaits me."* She died, but I did not see by what kind of death. I saw her body dead on the ground. This person was clothed like a religious. After this I returned to Jesus in my heart. He appeared contented, and so was I.

I have often had exterior signs and, as it were, predictions of considerable sufferings which await me during the life I have to pass on earth. What will these sufferings be? Of what nature will my martyrdom be? It matters little to me. I know that it was by suffering, and by His painful death on Calvary, that the Saviour Jesus redeemed the world and entered into His glory; I know that whoever would be His disciple must walk in His steps, and not reject what He voluntarily accepted. And the sight of my

Saviour will support me, fortify me, and make me love tribulation, pains, and tears. I will not refuse the bitter chalice, and at the height of my torments I will say : " My sweet Saviour, Thy will, not mine, be done. Thou offerest me this chalice ; I accept it to please Thee, and to testify to Thee how much I love Thee."

I crave your forgiveness, Monsieur ; these things must have but little interest for you ; but it is the life of your child. Guide her ; show her the truth. I refer all to you.

Your respectful servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 30th April, 1842.

LETTER VIII.

An angel announces to Marie the trials she is to undergo. Jesus instructs and consoles her. Her desire of sufferings.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I wish to speak to you to-day of the sufferings which await me, and which have been announced to me. You will judge, when I have told you what I experienced, whether I am to give credit to it or no.

One day I was in the church, praying before the altar of Mary, when I seemed to see a figure approaching me. I was unwilling to take any notice, thinking that it might be an illusion. I prayed the Lord not to permit me to be deceived ; and, acknowledging myself unworthy of every grace and favour, as He had taught me to do, I implored Him, at least, to have compassion upon me, and show me mercy. The

person, however, instead of retiring came near to me, and delivered to me a piece of white paper. I then addressed him in these terms: "May I be permitted to ask who you are?" "Read the paper I have given you," he said, "and return it to me." I read these words: "I am the angel of the Lord, and I execute His behests. He has sent me to you to apprise you that you will have to pass through severe trials and endure great sufferings, possibly very soon." I gave back the paper to him who had presented it, and said to him, "Could you tell me when these trials and sufferings are to begin?" "I cannot fix the time, but I warn you beforehand in order that you may prepare yourself, and that your pains may be the lighter when they come, because you will have fortified yourself against them. To aid you in bearing them with greater patience, I assure you that they will obtain for you grace and mercy from God." The angel then prostrated himself before the altar of Mary, his face all glowing with devotion, and presently he disappeared.

Some days afterwards I was in a state of profound despondency. The Lord Jesus asked me within my heart what ailed me, and I replied, "Lord, I am discontented and afflicted without knowing why." "My daughter," He said to me, "know that the heart of man cannot be happy and contented upon earth. It will never enjoy true felicity except in Heaven. Verily, I say to you, you will never be happy so long as you abide on earth. You will suffer much. I warn you of this beforehand; prepare yourself. Embrace My Cross with courage; be a faithful lover of the Cross. Could you refuse suffering when I have suffered so much for you? Could you refuse suffering when you

see My Mother so afflicted as she beheld me expiring upon the Cross? You are a daughter of Adam; you have sinned; you ought to suffer; suffering is the punishment of sin. Accept it, then, in the spirit of mortification, in the spirit of penance; in all things submit yourself to God; His will shall be manifested to you by your director. Do whatsoever he tells you, whatever pain it may cause you. Do nothing save by his order or his permission. Communicate only as often as he allows you. Remain in the world, if he bids you do so. Prepare yourself to depart when he shall give you leave. Abandon yourself to God; God will dispose all things for His greater glory and your salvation. Abandon yourself to your director; I will manifest to you My will by his. Be not occupied with yourself, your thoughts, your opinions; sacrifice all to please Me, sacrifice all for My will. Now, you will do My will, and be pleasing to Me, and follow on My steps, if you hearken to your director. He is, in your regard, the instrument which I use to guide you, to try you, to make you suffer when I please, in order to increase your merits and completely break your will.

“I say to you what I said to one of My disciples, who, before he followed Me, asked My permission to go first and bury his father: ‘Let the dead bury their dead.’* I am the Life; come to Me, and you shall not walk in darkness. Come to Me, I will console you, I will send you My angel to support you. Love suffering, seek it, and rejoice when you find it; unite your pains to Mine. Let your life be like My life, a perpetual sacrifice to My Father. You have

* St. Luke ix. 59, 60.

suffered little hitherto. The days of tribulation are about to come. They are before you : reject them not."

Another day He came again to dry my tears, and to say to me, "Take courage, My daughter ; the heavens are about to be shrouded for you with the clouds of tribulation and suffering. You are not as yet in the state in which I desire you to be, in order to draw you into the companionship of My chosen souls. I wish to make you pass through the refining furnace of affliction. Always follow the counsels of your director ; he will advise you what you are to do. When your lips have tasted of My chalice of bitterness you must drain it to the very dregs. My daughter, martyrdom awaits you. You will die far from your native place ; your death will be one of cruel suffering, yet nevertheless full of sweetness. It will be terrible ; but your heart will remain calm and tranquil. I do not tell you what will be the manner of your death, nor of what nature your martyrdom will be ; but verily it will be a true martyrdom. Learn from this day to sacrifice your will ; you will thus learn to endure death easily."

These words of the angel and of the Saviour often recur to my mind, and I am sometimes filled with alarm when I think of the horrors of the prison which I shall have to suffer and the torments of my martyrdom. This thought of my death, it is true, is very profitable, because it helps to detach me from every earthly affection, that I may love, desire, and wish for nothing but God.

Now, one day, after having communicated, I was in the little chamber of my heart, near to Jesus, and replenished with consolations. But soon I felt quite

lost. I could see nothing ; I was driven from my heart, and could find rest nowhere. After a few moments I seemed to be in a desert place. Perceiving a narrow path, I followed it very cautiously, for on both sides of me was a precipice. Pursuing this path, I arrived in front of a beautiful mansion. Two persons who were standing on the threshold of the door invited me to rest. "No," said I, "I cannot enter"; and I pursued my road. The way was no longer dangerous, but it was wild ; it brought me to a new dwelling, in which were several persons adoring a golden calf. They too invited me to rest. "No," I said again, "I cannot enter"; and I went on my way.

The track became wider and easier ; it led me to a large open space, in the midst of which I saw Jesus Crucified. As soon as He perceived me He called me to Him, saying, "Come, Marie, and see the state to which My love for you has reduced Me. See how I suffer, and yet you would suffer nothing for Me, My daughter." Ah, Monsieur, I cannot tell you what I felt at that moment ; I would have wished to suffer in my body and in my soul all the torments which Jesus endured. I cast myself at His feet, and said, "Lord, I embrace Thy Cross, I fasten myself to it, I desire nothing but it ; cause me to suffer whatsoever Thou pleasest. Let suffering enwrap my very life,* let pain be the pillow of my head, and tribulation the clothing of my person." "My daughter," said the Saviour, "you desire, then, to live for Me?" "Yes, Lord, for ever!" "Will you always thus bear witness to Me?" "Yes, Lord, I will witness even with my blood, if Thou shalt

* Literally, "Let suffering be the bark of my life—Que la souffrance soit l'écorce de ma vie."

ask it of me." "Do you, then, hope to suffer all this in your own strength?" "No, Lord, I can do nothing without Thee; but with Thee I will brave the fury of all the demons in hell; with Thee I will set at naught the barbarity of the most ferocious and cruel executioners."

Such, Monsieur, is what I believe I have seen, felt, and heard. It seems to me at this moment that I am ready for everything; that I fear nothing. I have a hunger and thirst for sufferings and tribulations. Will they come? of this I am ignorant. If none come to me, my suffering will then be not to suffer, and my martyrdom not to be martyred. May the will of God be done in all things and for ever.

This letter is very long; I have robbed you, Monsieur le Curé, of many precious moments. Forgive me, and be assured of the gratitude I feel for all the interest you take in the salvation of my soul. I should be ungrateful indeed if I did not assist you in directing and conducting me by enabling you to read my heart, and laying bare before you what passes in the depth of my soul.

Pray for my soul, pray for your child; do you who are my father implore God to take pity on me and unite me to Him here on earth by the faithful fulfilment of His will, that I may behold, possess and love Him in Heaven.

I abide at the foot of my Saviour's Cross, there to renew, in the truth and sincerity of my soul, the sentiments of profound respect with which I am, Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 16th June, 1842.

LETTER IX.

Vision of the destroying angel.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

One day, while I was at work, I felt in my heart a strong attraction which I could not resist, for I found it impossible to be at rest anywhere. I abandoned myself to this attraction, and then I seemed to find myself in a large square in Paris. In the middle of this square I saw a young man standing on a low pillar. He was clothed in a red garment; he had a diadem on his head, and in his hands he held a sheathed sword and a bow. His glances were like lightning, and his lips seemed ready to pour forth menaces. Over his head I saw inscribed, in characters of fire, "The Destroying Angel."

At this sight, strange feelings of fear, grief and compassion came over me, and I exclaimed several times, "Lord, save Paris; save the king!" I remained a long time prostrate before God, uttering only groans and supplications.

This, Monsieur, is what I saw in following this attraction, and this is what I did.

I have the honour, Monsieur le Curé, to be, with the deepest respect,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 21st June, 1842.

LETTER X.

*Marie fears being deceived and betrayed into vanity.
Jesus encourages her.*

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

Two things sadden and distress me greatly : the first is the fear of being deceived ; the second, the temptation to take a pride in what I experience and in what passes within me. Nevertheless, in the midst of my trouble and affliction, I am sustained by an invisible power which I cannot explain, and which I can call by no other name than the Saviour Jesus. And, in fact, when I am suffering from the fear of being deceived, I seem to see the Saviour Jesus coming to me and saying to me, " My daughter, abandon yourself wholly to God. Allow Him to do with you what He pleases. You will not be deluded, you will not be deceived, if you place your hope in Him." At other times He adds, " If you will not trust either Me or your own judgment, question your director ; he has a special grace to enlighten you."

In fine, He teaches me in what manner I am to reason with myself. " My daughter," He says, " if the devil were deceiving you, if it were he who came to speak to you in order to lead you astray, he would forbid you to report his words to any one whomsoever, while I bid you to communicate Mine to your director. The devil, in fact, would teach you nothing but falsehood and lies, and, in order to prevail upon you more surely by preventing your being undeceived, he would urge you to be silent. My word, on the contrary, is a word of truth : this is why I command you to communicate it to your director, that he may reassure

you and confirm you in the truth which I teach you. The devil would, nevertheless, urge you to speak of the wonderful things which you see, and which are operated in you, because his greatest desire is to inflame souls with pride ; whereas I enjoin you to speak of them solely to your director, in order to keep you perfectly humble. How can you dread being deceived? The tree is known by its fruits ; if they are bad, the tree is bad. Satan will never inspire you with anything but evil ; but I inspire what is good."

When I experience temptations to vanity and pride, when they are so violent that in the morning I fear being unable to hold out until evening without yielding to them, I seem to hear the voice of Jesus speaking thus to me, when I take refuge at the foot of His tabernacle to beg His aid : " My daughter, why should you be proud? of yourself you are but nothingness and sin ; all you may possess does not proceed from yourself, but from God. If you are only nothingness, can you glory in your nothingness? If you are only sin, can you pride yourself on sin? Being nothingness and sin, be assured that you deserve only to be forgotten, hated, and regarded with horror by every creature." Sometimes He says to me, " Look upon yourself, My daughter, as the last of creatures, as the servant of all, as one whom all the world has a right to command. Look upon God as your sovereign master."

Or He speaks thus to me : " I will suppose, My daughter, that you are very rich, that you possess immense treasures. A poor man comes and knocks at your door, and, out of kindness, you bestow on him a considerable sum, which relieves him from his state of want. Another poor person comes, and you give him

only an ordinary alms, so that he has to continue his beggar's life. Neither of these poor men had deserved anything more than had the other ; you have given what you willed to give, and to whom you willed. Would he to whom you had given the large sum of money have reason to glory in the gift as if he had deserved it ? No, My daughter. God also acts in this wise : He gives to whom He pleases. All are poor before Him ; He alone is truly rich, and no one must be proud on account of what God has given him."

On another occasion He said to me, "I will suppose that some one gives you a magnificent book : would you not be very foolish if you were elated at the possession as though you had yourself composed it, while you had simply received it from another's hands ? Still greater would be your folly if you were to pride yourself on the favours which I grant you. You do not merit them. I give them to you because it pleases Me to do so, and without any merit on your part."

In conclusion, I will tell you what happened to me one day after Holy Communion. I was beseeching God to give me humility with a great desire to obtain it. I penetrated into my heart, where I found Jesus seated on His throne. I have already spoken to you, by word of mouth or in writing, of a deep abyss which I often perceive in my heart ; at this moment it appeared more frightful to me than ever. Jesus took me by the hand, and led me to the brink. I saw that round this abyss there were steps leading down to the depth below. These steps were about as distant from each other as those of a staircase. They were neither of stone nor of wood ; they consisted merely of little iron bars about an inch in breadth and thickness ; all

the rest was an empty space, so that if you failed to place your foot on the bar you must of necessity fall down into the abyss. Neither was there any handrail. The Lord said to me: "Descend, My daughter." I did not wish to disobey Him, but I clearly saw that I should fall. So I took hold of His hand to support me, and then I descended fearlessly. After going down several of the steps both my feet slipped at the same time. How terrified I was! I clung with all my might to Jesus with my two hands, exclaiming, "Lord, hold me up, hold me up!" "What would become of you, My daughter," He said, "if I were to abandon you?" "Ah! Lord, I should be precipitated into the most terrible abyss." Then the Saviour said to me: "Let us return, My daughter; and understand that you can do nothing without Me; that without My aid you would every instant sink into the abyss. You can do nothing without Me: on what, then, can you value yourself?"

This is what I experience, what I feel, what I hear. It is a great consolation to me. You also will speak to me when you have passed your judgment on it all, and I shall rely on your word as on the word of truth. I may fall into illusion, I may deceive myself as to what I experience, feel, or hear; but illusion is impossible with you; you are able to judge aright of what I communicate to you. You have the necessary graces for that purpose on account of your ministry. Aid me, enlighten me, show me the truth, show me the good way, show me the only true life; I desire to live by that life, to walk in that way, to embrace that truth; I desire to attach myself to truth, and never to abandon it; I desire to remain in the way which leads to God, and never to quit it; I desire to preserve

the life which the Saviour Jesus has given me by His merits on Calvary, and never to let it go. O Life, without which there is no life, be my life. O Way, out of which there is no way which leads to God, be my way. O Truth, which art one and indivisible, be my repose in time and in eternity.

Receive the assurance, Monsieur le Curé, of my entire devotion to you and my most profound respect.

Pray for your child and very humble servant,

MARIE LATASTE.

MIMBASTE, 25th June, 1842.

LETTER XI.

*Exhortation to an Ecclesiastic.**

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

These are the words which the Saviour addressed to the ecclesiastic—you know whom I mean.

“My son, I am satisfied with your obedience in executing My commands and My will; your humility is pleasing to Me, and your charity ministers to My honour. Advance more and more, My son, in that filial love which you have for the best of fathers, and strive to increase in yourself these sentiments of ardent charity. Be of good heart, and fortify yourself to support the troubles and afflictions which you may have to encounter in the course of your life. Trials are but for a season, and they purchase an immense weight of glory for him who endures them with patience. Do not suffer yourself to be disquieted by

* M. l'Abbé Dupérier, director of the Grand Séminaire of Dax. See Note to Letter XXII.

the smoke exhaled from the hearts of the wicked. I will rise up against them, and with one breath of My mouth will scatter them.

“Do not attach yourself to earthly greatness. What is it in comparison with the greatness of him who belongs to Me, or with the sweetness of My love? Is not My love like to exquisite honey which ravishes the heart of him who tastes it? The speech of man is as a light feather which the wind carries away, but My will abides stable and firm in the heart of him who fears Me.

“My son, raise, strengthen, perfect the spiritual edifice of your sanctification, in order that He who laid its first foundations may complete it by crowning it. My son, adorn, prepare, perfume well your house, for I have determined to abide in it eternally. My son, what are your thoughts, your desires, your affections? Trust in me, I will not forsake you. I know all that passes within you; and your sentiments and your prayers do not find Me indifferent. My son, although you are still on earth, place all your affections in Heaven. My son, it is a mark of the love I bear you that I am pleased to speak these words to you to-day. I finish with those which I once addressed to My disciples: ‘Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.’”

You will communicate to this ecclesiastic what I have written, if you think proper to do so. Be pleased, at least, I pray you, to commend me to his fervent prayers.

For yourself, Monsieur le Curé, I will content myself with reminding you what need I have of the help of the Lord, for I know how much you have at heart the health of my soul.

Receive, I pray you, the assurance of my high consideration, with which I have the honour to be, with the deepest respect and the warmest gratitude,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 13th November, 1842.

LETTER XII.

Jesus explains a vision which Marie had beheld in her heart.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I submit to you to-day what happened to me one Sunday before Holy Communion.

I saw my heart as though it had been a spacious hall ; I remained at the door, awaiting the arrival of Jesus. Angels were adorning the place in which He was about to repose. All the way from the door to the Saviour's throne they placed nosegays of flowers and lighted candles in two rows. The flowers and the lights were arranged at regular intervals, and so that there should be a light after each nosegay. The throne of Jesus was higher than usual ; I counted, if I recollect, four or five steps. The flowers and the lights formed a sort of living hedge, and marked out the path which led to Jesus.

The angels had arranged everything for the moment of receiving communion, and Jesus descended into my heart surrounded with light and glory. I still remained near the door, having, ever since the evening before, felt overwhelmed with shame and confusion. Jesus called me to Him, and, proceeding towards His

throne, I cast myself at the Saviour's feet, and thus remained, well-nigh lost in the contemplation of Him, devoid of all feelings of any kind, and almost in a swoon. Presently I came to myself, and took my station at the foot of His throne. His presence shed in my heart, the door of which He caused to be closed, a flood of light of surpassing brilliancy. I fixed my eyes upon Him, and soon they turned instinctively towards heaven, following those of Jesus, who seemed to be praying for me. Immediately I perceived a stream of water descending copiously upon me, which ran down over my hands and my dress into a little reservoir which was below me. A multitude of persons came to this reservoir and drew water from it, some for drinking, others for washing themselves. After they had thus drunk or washed themselves, they went and prostrated themselves before a large crucifix which was behind the throne of Jesus. Then they joined their hands together and prayed with fervour, looking up into heaven ; they then withdrew.

These were replaced by a multitude of angels, so numerous that it was necessary to remove the flowers and the lights to make room for them. Two of the angels, more beautiful than the rest, placed themselves at my side, prostrating themselves on their knees before the Saviour. Then they rose and took their places, one on the right, the other on the left of Jesus. I also rose, and placed myself again at the feet of the Saviour, which I lovingly embraced.

Presently the two angels took me by my hands, and would have led me away with them. I did not know whether I must follow them or not. I was willing to yield to their desire, but it was all in vain : a secret power, greater than my own and that of the

angels, kept me in my place. Accordingly, they left me and disappeared ; and I then prostrated myself again at the feet of Jesus.

“ My daughter,” He then said, “ I will explain to you the vision which you have just seen. The lights and the flowers are the virtues and the acts of virtue which enable souls to follow the path which leads to Me. These lights and flowers have been disposed by angels. It is they, in fact, who watch over all Christians, that their hearts may not stumble on sin, and that they may practise virtue. I had the door of your heart closed, to teach you that nothing vain and unprofitable ought to find entrance there. The crucifix which is behind My throne is to show you that the remembrance of My Passion ought to be deeply graven in your heart. The persons who drank of the water which streamed over you, or who washed themselves therein, are a figure of souls which, consumed with the desire of serving God, shall come to learn it of you, and of those which, touched by the grace and unction of your words, shall wash themselves from their sins in the sacrament of penance. You saw them presently withdraw to the foot of the crucifix, recollect themselves, join their hands together, and pray with fervour : this signifies that they will thankfully acknowledge the graces which God has given them. It is thus, My daughter, that I shall be glorified by you, if you are faithful to Me.

“ The rest of the vision I will not explain to you : know only that I forgive you your sins ; that I wish to have neither wrinkle, nor spot, nor stain in My beloved ; that I wish her to be fair as the dawn, pure like an angel, and holy like God. You are My beloved, and I love you ; I love you more than you will ever com-

prehend ; bless and glorify for ever My mercy and goodness to you."

This, Monsieur le Curé, is what I seem to have seen and heard. You will judge if it comes from my own imagination, from the spirit of darkness, or from God. I refer it all to you, commending myself to your prayers, and assuring you of my heart-felt gratitude and veneration.

I am, Monsieur le Curé, with the deepest respect,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 18th December, 1842.

LETTER XIII.

The book and the casket.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I have never thought of telling you the way in which I furnish you with the writings which you have required of me, and explaining to you how, after the lapse of so long a time, I am able to recall the discourses and words of the Saviour Jesus as if He had almost just addressed them to me. It is thus.

One day, about two years ago, Jesus appeared to me and said : "My daughter, come to Me." I drew nigh to Him. He held in His hand a book and a casket. He presented them to me, saying : "I desire you, My daughter, to preserve most carefully the memory of My words, and the good effect of the virtuous movements with which I shall inspire your heart. This book contains all the words that I shall address to you. I forbid you ever to open it without

My permission. Open it now." I opened it ; it was written on throughout, from the first page to the last ; I closed it again immediately. "This casket," He continued, "contains the perfume which will exhale from the words which I shall address to you. You will never open it without My permission. Open it, My daughter." I opened it, and perceived the most beautiful flowers which I had ever beheld ; in fact, a sweet and delicious fragrance proceeded from them. "My daughter," then said the Saviour Jesus to me, "take this book of knowledge and of wisdom and this casket ; conceal them in your heart. Later you will have need to open them, and they will be of great use to you."

This is quite true, Monsieur ; and it is to this book and this casket that I have recourse when I wish to write what I remit to you in my papers, or when I address a letter to you. I open the book at hazard, I read, and I write. Sometimes Jesus will not allow me to open it ; I then take the casket, smell the flowers, and write whatever comes into my mind. Now, I have noticed that the book contains the different instructions which the Saviour has given me, whether for myself or for those who may come to be acquainted with them, while the casket contains and inspires me with only that which concerns myself.

It was but a few days ago that the Lord said to me : "The book and the casket which I have given you are granaries of plenty, which will avail you in time of dearth ; that is to say, in case of forgetfulness or the insufficiency of your memory. Your writings and your virtues will also be two granaries of plenty, whence the Egyptians, that is, sinners and burdened souls, will come and take ample provisions. Neglect, there-

fore, nothing ; receive My word, and preserve it in your mind. The book and the casket which I have given you will profit you only so far as you shall have deserved it by your attention to what I have said."

When I cannot remember what I ought to say, I have recourse to my granaries of plenty. Alas ! Monsieur le Curé, sometimes I find the door of these granaries closed. I know well that it has been my own fault. I have not always hearkened attentively to the word of the Saviour. May He deign to have mercy on me and forgive me. Nevertheless, I always tell you what I can remember, and all that presents itself to my mind, in the sincere desire of my soul to hide nothing from you and to tell you the whole truth.

You will think what you please of this. I relate to you all that passes in me. Pray for me, most revered father of my soul, to the Saviour Jesus, that I may sanctify myself, and ever correspond to all the good cautions and all the holy counsels which you may give me.

I am, with the most entire devotion and the profoundest esteem,

Your most obedient servant,

MARIE LATASTE.

MIMBASTE, 28th December, 1842.

LETTER XIV.

A vision concerning perfection. Graces received by Marie on occasion of the Jubilee.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

One day, after Holy Communion, I seemed to be in a place which it is difficult to describe. It was

surrounded by a vast wall, with very massive foundations. The wall was high, but the higher it rose the narrower it became. It had a singular appearance, and I wished to examine it on all sides.

I ascended on the side which looked as if it was gilded. The ascent was pretty steep, nevertheless I accomplished it with ease. I came to a small door, for on the top of the wall there was a little chamber without a roof. I knocked at the door, and a venerable old man came to open it, saying in a kindly voice, "Good-morning, my child ; come in." I did not know who he was, but I saw clearly that it was not the Lord. I was surprised, and said to him, "My father, how did you come up here ?" "And you, my child," he answered, "how did you come ?" "I followed," I replied, "the attraction which was given me, and I came ; but will you tell me, my father, who you are ?"

"My daughter," said the old man, "I will comply with your request : I am a miser. When I was young I was very poor, but I had in my heart a very great desire for riches. My ambition was insatiable, and I spoke to the king of that ardent thirst for wealth which I nourished in my heart. The king approved my desire ; he promised me great riches and a place at court ; but first of all he wished me to remain shut up for some time in this elevated place, whence I can more easily survey the whole extent of his domains : that is to say, gaze up into the sky, where is the throne of God.

"It is a curious sight to watch the various movements of men, for one who, like me, lives apart from the rest of the world. What follies, what meannesses, what deceits, what lies, what turpitudes ! What a

cleaving to earth ; what forgetfulness of Eternity in the thought of the present ! No, my daughter, I have but one aspiration ; and my hope of happiness hereafter is the only support of my life.” “ But, my father,” I said, “ how are you able to live in this place ? ” “ My daughter,” he rejoined, “ it is not so much by the material nourishment of my body as by the spiritual nourishment of my soul, or by graces and inspirations from on high, that I sustain my life.” “ From the way in which you speak, my father, I perceive that you love the Lord : be pleased, therefore, I pray you, to address a few words to me for the good of my soul.” “ My daughter, I have nearly said enough to you : only you must understand my words in the sense I am going to explain them. I am not an old man, nor a man at all. I am to you the figure of a soul ; and what you see is the image of what every soul ought to be. This high place represents perfection. See how solid, broad and deep the foundations are. The walls which go on decreasing in width till they reach this abode show that you ought to mount upward by the purity of your intentions, making everything to centre in one and the same end, God. Live solitary in your soul, as you see me live in this little cell, banishing even idle and useless thoughts, and occupying yourself with meditating on the eternal truths.”

When he had spoken these words to me, he invited me to pray. While I was praying I found myself transported to a spacious mansion, which seemed to be solidly built, and I rang the little bell which was at the door. It was opened, I entered, and followed a narrow path which brought me to another door ; it was shut, I rang again, and it opened. I then found

myself in a room which must have been muddy or wet, for I could cross it only by putting my feet on some little posts placed at intervals. In this way I traversed two or three apartments which looked like vast chasms. At length, after crossing the last, I perceived two persons ; I hastened eagerly towards one of them, for the passage was so slippery that it became more difficult every moment. Then I perceived a pool, which I had to cross. A boat was given me, which I rowed, tugging painfully at the oar. I reached the other side, and there I found two angels with wide-expanding wings. Their very look inspired devotion, so penetrated were they therewith. They took me by my two hands, and, while they held me, a complete change came over me. I became shining white and all resplendent ; I beheld myself clothed in a white garment ; a white veil of most delicate texture enveloped my head, and a beautiful crown encircled my brow.

The two angels then led me into a room like a convent parlour. Presently there came in a person of majestic mien with a lady of great beauty. I did not quite know them at once ; I thought they were Jesus and Mary, but I was not sure. It was not long, however, before I recognised Mary by the way in which I felt attracted towards her. He who was with her drew a deep sigh as He looked upon me : immediately I recognised Jesus, and felt myself all inflamed with love of Him.

Mary prostrated herself at the feet of Jesus. I did the same. A moment after we rose. Jesus gave me a little book ; on opening it, I found that it was nearly all blank, yet I perceived a few lines of writing. This did not content me, and I gave the book to Mary, who

took it and presented it to Jesus, saying to Him, "My Son, be pleased to satisfy the desire of Thy little servant Marie." Jesus took the book, and then gave me a leaf of blank paper. I took it, carefully examined it, and again perceived in a corner a few lines of writing. I gave it back to Mary, who returned it to Jesus, saying, as before, "My Son, hearken to the prayer of Thy little servant Marie."

Then Jesus said to me, "My daughter, My word shall be to you in place of the blank paper which I gave you. All your sins are forgiven you, by virtue of My merits, through the mercy of God and for My Mother's sake." I threw myself at His feet imploring His benediction. The Saviour made the sign of the Cross on my forehead, on my mouth, and on my heart, and blessed me. Then I threw myself on my knees before Mary begging her blessing also, and she blessed me. In receiving the benediction of Jesus I felt my soul filled with graces ; in receiving that of Mary I felt my soul flooded with a delicious heavenly sweetness.

This day was the day on which I gained the jubilee. How happy I was that day ! How happy also I am every time I have the satisfaction of receiving within me Him who is the repose and centre of my heart, the only object of my affection and my love ; whom I prefer to everything, even to the choicest gifts and greatest treasures ; who, being everything to me, is to me in place of everything ; who is the only consolation of my soul, its riches, its happiness, its life, and its joy. Enamoured of His beauty and charmed with His grace, tasting with rapture the sweetness of His presence, how happy my soul is when it possesses Jesus ! Is there anything comparable to that posses-

sion, which even on earth bestows the fruition of Heaven? How rich one is when one has His love! Yes, I am happy, and my happiness is beyond all expression. I am happy, and I would not exchange my happiness for all the treasures, all the delights, all the satisfactions of earth. I am happy, because Jesus suffices me, and with Him I desire nothing more. All praise and thanksgiving therefore be rendered for ever to the Lord God of my soul.

Be pleased, Monsieur le Curé, to receive the homage of my profound veneration and entire obedience.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 29th December, 1842.

LETTER XV.

Jesus teaches Marie how to edify her companions.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

It is with entire confidence that I continue to submit to your judgment everything that passes within me.

One day Jesus had entered my heart; He was seated on His throne, and I was delighting myself in His presence. I felt a strong attraction dragging me forcibly away from Him, but I could not resolve to leave Him. At length I yielded to the attraction, and little by little I ascended, while the roof of my heart appeared to become much loftier. After I had attained a certain height, I seated myself in a chair which I found set against the wall of my heart, and a crown was placed on my head. Then I rose still higher, and

I saw a number of persons whom I did not know pass before me, and then disappear. I still kept ascending, and found myself at last in a vast desert. I threw myself on the sand to pray, and presently rose again from my knees.

I wished to examine the place to which I had ascended, but, fearing to fall, I drew back. But some one—who it was I do not know—approached me, and fastened to my girdle a riband, the end of which reached to the sky. Then I looked down without fear. In the depth below I saw a great number of persons, who seemed to be stretching out their arms to me that I might draw them up. I stooped down as far as I could, being supported by the riband which reached to the sky, and I succeeded in drawing some of them up, but it was only with extreme difficulty, they were so heavy. I was not able to draw up any more with my hands. Then he who had fastened the riband to my girdle gave me a chain, which I threw down into the abyss, holding one end of it in my hand. In this way I succeeded in drawing up a good number more. Soon I had no longer any need of the chain : it seemed to me that an unknown power propelled them out of the abyss, and I received then three or four at a time. At last I saw one ascend carried up in a chair : I welcomed her, and stretched out my arms to embrace her with affection.

Then we proceeded into the desert ; we came to a door, which I opened easily, and, placing myself on the right, while she whom I had embraced placed herself on the left, all the rest passed on in front. Opposite this door there was another ; but, in order to reach it, it was necessary to cross a low trellis of very fine wire. I stepped over it with my companion ; then

I opened the door, still placing myself at the right, while she placed herself on the left, and I said to the others, "Either pass on or turn back." They were afraid to pass, because there was a deep abyss below the trellis. Some, however, crossed; then the rest followed, with the exception of one who was very heavy. "Courage, my sister, come on," I said to her kindly; "you can come if you like." She advanced half-way, and then stopped. "Now come," I said to her again, "or else go back." An expression of renewed ardour appeared on her countenance, and in a moment she was by my side.

Then we traversed a long gallery, at the end of which was a crucifix. At the foot of the crucifix was a key, with which I opened another large apartment, which appeared to me to be the church at Mimbaste. After this I heard a voice; it seemed to be the voice of Jesus. It said, "Edify each other, sustain yourselves by exercises of piety. You have prayed for them, Marie, and I have heard you. I enjoin you to set them all a good example, and to uphold them in the practice of virtue. These will faithfully copy your example; the others whom you saw pass before you will not be impressed by your manner of life, but you shall receive your crown none the less, and shall be seated on the throne which is reserved for you in Heaven, if, while traversing the desert of life, you save those who wish to walk in your footsteps and to practise virtue." Then they all cried out together, "Yea, Lord, we wish it." For myself, I could only say these words: "Lord, have mercy on me, I am a poor sinner."

Is this illusion? Is it truth? Is it a deceit of the spirit of darkness? You will judge, Monsieur; I do

but faithfully report what I have experienced, or what I believe I have experienced.

Pray for me, my beloved father in Jesus Christ our Lord, and receive the assurance of the respectful sentiments with which I subscribe myself,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 3rd January, 1843.

LETTER XVI.

Replies to questions proposed by M. Dupérier: Had Marie studied the Scriptures? What were her physical sensations during and after her visions?

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I have had a conversation at Dax with the venerable priest to whom you referred me. I answered the questions he put to me as well as I could. Now, you know that I always feel a difficulty in speaking; and, indeed, I am unable to speak of what I experience to any one but yourself. You have considered that, for my good, you ought to engage me to consult M. Dupérier. I have done so with the deference which I always have had, and which I always shall have, for your advice, and I acknowledge that I have had no reason to repent of it. Nevertheless, I may not perhaps have explained myself in a sufficiently precise and clear manner with regard to two questions which he addressed to me—namely, whether I had learned from our Lord Himself the passages of Scripture which are found in my writings; and what my physical sensa-

tions were when He addressed me, or when I saw Him face to face.

I would wish to-day, with your permission, to repair this defect, and to reply with the greatest precision of which I am capable.

In regard to the first question, I must begin by observing that I have read the whole of the Bible, with the exception of certain portions which my previous director, as well as yourself, recommended me not to read. Having stated this, I add that there are passages of which I was ignorant, or which I had entirely forgotten; others, again, which I remembered. In cases where I was ignorant, Jesus would tell me to open my Bible or my *Paroissien*, and would then comment on the passage upon which my eye had fallen. Where I had forgotten, He would recall the passage to my mind, and give me the explanation of it; but in cases where I had remembered, He would only comment on the passage, so as to impress it on my mind without further dwelling upon it. I have but one remark to make as to those texts of Scripture with which I was not acquainted, and which the Saviour was pleased to make the subject of His instruction. Frequently my eye rested on the verse itself; at other times I had to read several verses. I always recognised the one which was to form the subject of the Saviour's discourse by a special attraction which imprinted it on my mind, while the others made no such impression. I have nothing else to observe in reply to this first question.

Here is my reply to the other. It shall be very simple.

I experience no distressing bodily sensation either when Jesus speaks to me or previously. My body

seems neither active nor passive. I cannot tell you precisely what is its state. It appears to me that it is without movement ; that it has not the use of its senses ; that all activity remains within my soul. When Jesus wishes to speak to me, or desires to manifest Himself to me, I feel myself attracted towards Him, towards His Tabernacle, and I move towards Him either bodily or in spirit. When able to go to the church, I kneel either on the floor or on a chair ; I think of Jesus, I adore Him, I give Him my heart, I turn my eyes towards the Tabernacle : then all disappears—church, altar, Tabernacle ; I see only Jesus and the priest, if it is during Mass. It is a wholly new world. I walk, I kneel down, I go to Jesus, I place myself near His throne, I listen to His words ; and when Jesus has ceased to speak to me, and I am no longer speaking to Him, I feel myself drawn to return Him thanks, and then I find myself still on my knees, on the floor or on a chair, in the same position as at the moment when I knelt down in His presence. All this occurs without any disturbance or bodily suffering ; only I feel a certain sweetness following on these intimate relations of my soul with the Saviour.

When I have been alone in my own room at home, and Jesus was conversing with me in prayer, I have never seen any one ; but I have often been surprised just at the moment when He has ceased speaking to me. At such times I have occasionally felt a little put out. But now, thanks to the Divine Saviour, I have been enabled to overcome this kind of sensitiveness. However, I must acknowledge that, after these moments passed with the Saviour, I feel in myself much less inclination for bodily exertion. I think of Jesus a long time after I have heard Him ; I should

wish to be still with Jesus ; I should wish to occupy myself with nothing but Jesus ; I feel this attraction sensibly, and it throws my body into a sort of languor, which renders work harder and more irksome to me. I have nothing further to add in reply to this second question.

What I have just said, without reserve and in entire confidence, seems to me to be a complete reply to the two questions which M. Dupérier put to me. It may be, however, that I did not explain myself as clearly by word of mouth as I have now done in writing. You may make what use you please of my letter ; you have full authority over me and over everything that belongs to me. If you are of opinion that you ought to communicate it to M. Dupérier you can do so freely.

Receive, I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my high consideration, and of the lively gratitude with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 13th January, 1843.

LETTER XVII.

The designs of God in regard to Marie's family.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I was one day near the Saviour Jesus, reposing in the Tabernacle of His love. I was thinking of the call* which I had heard proceeding from His mouth ; I was thinking of my family whom I was going to

* She means her call to the religious life at the Sacré Cœur.

leave with only Marguerite, and of my sister Quitterie, who left us long ago ; and I said to the Saviour, " I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou may'st be pleased to lead me. Only say the word, my God, and the hour of Thy choice shall be the hour when I will forsake all and attach myself to Thee alone."

The Saviour then spoke to me in a voice full of sweetness. " My daughter," He said, " I lived on the earth three different lives : My public life among men, whom I instructed and healed of their diseases ; My hidden life at Nazareth with My Mother and St. Joseph, to whom I was subject ; and My intimate life with My Heavenly Father. Now, I cast My eyes on your sister Quitterie as the one who should represent Me in My public life. She shall convey to men the succours they need in their bodily infirmities, and shall often procure them also the aids which they need still more for their spiritual infirmities. Your sister Marguerite I have chosen to represent Me in My hidden life at Nazareth ; she shall remain with your father and mother, to watch over them, take care of them, and obey them. But you I have chosen and have destined to represent Me in My intimate life with My Father who is in Heaven. I never willed aught but the will of My Father ; I always did what was most agreeable to My Father ; I never sought My own glory, but that of My Father ; I sacrificed Myself every moment of My life to redeem mankind and deliver them from sin ; I never anticipated in anything My Father's hour. In fine, I made Him known to the world, and He exalted My Name above every name ; and in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth every knee doth bow thereto. My daughter, the thought of My Father was ever present to My mind ; I listened

to His word and judged everything according to it, and did nothing without Him.

“Do you therefore keep My intimate life with My Father ever before your eyes ; have no other will, no other desire, save the will and the desires of My Father. Seek ever His glory in all things. Sacrifice yourself before Him every instant, both to expiate your own sins and to obtain mercy for others. Never forestall His hour, await it with submission, and He will glorify you in Heaven. Let the thought of Him abide ever in your mind ; hearken to His word, which is My word ; live by Him, in Him, and for Him, and be ever united to Him. Receive into yourself the effusion of His life by grace. If you will act thus, I will also reveal to you secrets unknown to all others, as My Father reveals to Me the eternal secrets of His Divine life ; and through these communications your union with Meshallgo on ever increasing and developing.

“Now that I have made known to you My designs respecting you, be still more submissive to My will. Let your life be still more humble, and fear to render yourself unworthy of My benefits.”

Ah, Monsieur, I am deeply sensible that I do not merit the favours of Jesus ; I know that He does all in compassion for me. May I love Him ever, and abandon myself always to His holy will.

Pray for me, beg the Saviour to deliver me from all the enemies of my soul, and to keep me under His protection.

Be pleased to receive, Monsieur le Curé, the sentiments of my veneration and entire respect.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 17th February, 1843.

LETTER XVIII.

Parable of the king, the esquire, and the olive-tree.

MONSIEUR LE CURE,

I am about to submit to you something I have experienced ; you will form what judgment you please about it.

One day, after communion, Jesus said to me—for, indeed, I believe it was His voice that spoke to me—“I will lift up My voice, and I will say, ‘Rejoice, O house of Juda, for a great glory awaits you.’ Rejoice ye to whom I said, ‘He that receiveth you receiveth Me, he that heareth you heareth Me, he that despiseth you despiseth Me.’ Rejoice ye who are the descendants of those to whom I said, ‘Go, teach all nations, and baptise them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ Rejoice ye to whom I have confided the apple of My eye. Rejoice, O Jerusalem, because thou shalt receive into thy bosom a bride of the Spouse, a daughter of the Father, adorned with the grace of her Spouse and enriched with the treasures of the Father.”

Then He added, “A king, visiting his dominions, found in the desert a plant. It pleased him much, and so he took it away with him, saying, ‘This plant is an excellent olive-tree, which I desire to place in my garden ; it will supply me with oil wherewith to season the choice dishes which I set before my friends.’ He then gave it into the charge of his favourite esquire, and said, ‘Take good care of this plant.’ The esquire accordingly gave his attention to the plant, and perceived that it was in truth an olive-tree of an excellent species. He cultivated it carefully,

clearing away the weeds which grew around it, supplying it with manure from time to time, and pouring over it pure water which he drew from the king's well.

"The other esquires laughed at him, and said, 'Fool that you are, to spend so much pains on a vine which our king has had planted in his garden, and the intoxicating juice of which will cause men to lose their reason! As for us, we will beware of the seeming sweetness of this liquor.'

"They might laugh as they pleased at the king and at the plant he chose to have cultivated, their gibes had small effect on the esquire: so far from it, he observed the plant still more closely, and every time he approached it the perfume it exhaled was that of an olive so sweet-scented that he confidently exclaimed, 'This is no vine on which I expend my care: it is an olive-tree, which will supply my master with oil wherewith to prepare him rich viands.'

"The king, having heard the remarks which the other esquires made, was much displeased, and said to them, 'Fools, for what do you take me, that I should plant a vine in my garden to damage the other flowers? No, it is not a vine, but an olive-tree most precious.' Then, addressing the faithful esquire, he said to him, 'Dig up this plant, and transfer it to another flower-bed which I will show you, the soil of which is more fertile.' Then the king himself made a cage of gold, which he ordered him to put over the plant, that nothing might tarnish the beauty of its verdure; and, for a still further precaution, he bade his esquire cover the golden cage with a veil, so that no one might be able to gaze on its lustre. But the esquire said to the king, 'Why put this veil over it? the plant can

receive no hurt.' 'Cover it with the veil,' the king replied, for he was acquainted with all its properties ; ' the beauty of this plant and the delicious perfume which issues from it might injure the health of some of my subjects. They might envy me my plant, and so lose my good graces, because I desire the plant for myself alone.'

" But the esquire said to himself, ' If I cover over this plant, I shall be acting like a smuggler, and, if any one should want me to show it to him, I should be filled with confusion : I will not put on the veil. The golden cage will prevent the king's plant from being injured ; and so much the worse for those who shall inhale too much of its fragrance, or grudge my liege its possession !' Accordingly, he took up the plant, placed it in the golden cage, but without covering it with a veil, and transported it to the new garden. Thus it came about that some who had good health but were of a feeble temperament inhaled the fragrance of the plant, and were so enraptured therewith that they would have wished to touch at least one of its leaves, but were prevented by the golden cage. Nay, approaching closer and closer to it, they became dazzled by its beauty and poisoned by its perfume, and cried out as they were dying : ' Cursed be the day on which I was born, and which has been the cause of my woe ; cursed be the day on which I first beheld this plant which has killed me !'

" Now the plant continued to grow and to spread in the new garden of the king, it bore fruit, and gave forth an oil of exquisite flavour. Then the faithful esquire, rallying his companions, said, ' I knew well that it was no vine on which my care was expended, but an olive-tree. What a sweet perfume its flowers

exhale, how abundant are its fruits, and how delicious is its oil ! Look ! does it not seem that its roots, which spread themselves through the whole garden, have enriched all the other plants and improved their quality ?' Thus did this esquire rejoice, and congratulate himself on the care with which he had cultivated the king's plant ; and one day the king sent for him and gave him a large reward.

" My daughter, I say to you in truth, happy is the garden to which the king transferred the plant of the desert ! " *

You will think what you please of this, Monsieur ; I am completely indifferent about it, as about all else. I desire God alone, I attach myself to God alone, and Him only do I wish to possess. I say it in all the sincerity of my heart, and God, who sees and knows my sentiments, will render testimony thereto on the day when the truth shall be made manifest ; I desire no other.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of the high consideration and lively gratitude which I entertain for you, and with which I venture to subscribe myself,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, *25th February*, 1843.

* This parable became the subject of a grievous trial to Marie, as it gave occasion to the distrust which M. Dupérier for a time entertained, or affected to entertain, respecting her visions. It is needless to say that the parable had reference to her religious vocation ; the explanation will be found in Letter XXVII.

LETTER XIX.

Reasons of Marie's apparent sadness.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

Your goodness and charity, all the regard you have shown me, the very great interest you have manifested in the health of my soul, cover me with shame and confusion, for I am a sinner. How can I testify to you all my gratitude? God alone sees how great and sincere it is. I beg you to accept the expression and the assurance of it which I now renew to you in writing.

To show you what entire confidence I repose in you, I wish to-day to disclose to you all that is most secret in my heart with respect to that sadness which you have detected in me, and which very few would have observed. If I have never said anything to you on the subject, I must sincerely declare that it was not from want of trust in you : indeed I must have shown you on more than one occasion how entirely I relied upon you. It would, in truth, have been a great relief to my mind to consult you in the trials which have come upon me one after the other, but I felt that my numerous sufferings proceeded from my own lack of virtue, and I applied myself rather to making acts of virtue than to procuring myself consolations.

You wish to know the cause and the nature of my sadness, and I will tell you in a few words. The sadness you have remarked in my exterior is different from that depressing melancholy which makes one incapable of anything. Nevertheless, I feel at times much oppressed and dejected ; but when this is the case, I pour out my heart into the bosom of God's

mercy, and He is pleased to console it and to fortify it, and thus it remains content in spite of everything painful and distressing which can happen to it.

The sadness which you think you perceive in me is not melancholy so much as natural disposition. When I was a child, of about twelve or thirteen years of age, my natural gravity, moodiness, and dulness were the occasion of much mortification to me. When I saw persons gifted with those engaging qualities which make the world esteem and love them, I should have wished to be like them ; the consciousness of my inability to become so only enhanced my discontent, and I naturally grew all the more sad and gloomy in my endeavours to resemble them. Useless labour ! I could not succeed.

Then the Saviour Jesus came to instruct me, and I ceased to desire mere natural qualities, because, as He taught and admonished me, it was better to prefer humility and simplicity to the address, the ability, and the spirit of the world. I am wanting in this humility and simplicity, I know ; but I desire it with all my heart, I strive to attain it, and, until I have acquired it, I think there will be observed in me that sort of preoccupation which is not reprehensible and is not really sadness.

My mother was grieved and distressed at seeing me silent when I might or ought to have spoken. I was much pained at it myself, but, I know not why, whenever I am with my mother and sister I seem to lack power to express myself, and have great difficulty in finding words ; but when I am conversing alone with strangers I have more courage and fluency. If I am able to speak on religion, or am bound to do so, as, for example, in teaching the Catechism, I do so with

facility and never lack words ; I am quite at my ease, and am never embarrassed in the slightest degree. At present, indeed, I feel less difficulty than I ever did in the matter of speaking, and I think I shall acquire even greater facility.

Nevertheless, you still perceive something in me which you call sadness, but which is not so. What you observe in me, and which reflects itself in my countenance by sensible signs, is the desire I have to unite myself more and more closely to God. I feel that I am out of my place. God has given me a vocation, and I should wish to be able to realise it. However, I say it in all sincerity, I have no desire beyond what God wills. I await His time. In the world nothing either pleases or displeases me. I try to endure with humility its evil spirit, and direct all my efforts not to fall into its snares.

Perhaps that which produces this interior concentration is what I have so long experienced and keep so secretly in my heart, never speaking of it to any one. Even if I wished to speak of it, I feel that I could not ; but to you I can say everything, and I do so without difficulty. I know nothing whatever of the natural sciences, nobody ever taught me them, and, when my mind turns to the contemplation of the universe, I confess my ignorance without manifesting any shame, and rejoice in the inmost depth of my soul at the remembrance of that word of eternal truth : "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." *

The Saviour Jesus instructs me in the supernatural order ; it is He who taught me everything I know, and that in a most perfect manner. There my mind

* St. Matthew v. 3.

and my heart are in repose, and they desire nothing more. When Jesus speaks to me I seem to be without movement, at least at such times as I have not the misfortune of being inattentive to His word.

What makes me even more concentrated interiorly is to feel myself at times abandoned, forsaken, feeble, and languid, exposed to all kinds of temptation, to a thousand enemies, and in conflict with myself; and then there is also the humiliation I experience from the dread of being deceived. Nevertheless, I assure you, Monsieur, that none of these trials disturb the peace and serenity of the superior region of my soul. The graces which the Saviour bestows upon me, the sweetness of His word or of His presence, keep me interiorly calm and tranquil. I repose without inquietude in the will of God, my Father who is in Heaven. I know that He wills everything that befalls me, both for His own glory and for my salvation, and I thank Him for it. A father does nothing against the interests of his child, if he be truly a father, that is to say, if he have a good heart, tender and affectionate; and who could compare his goodness to the goodness of God? Thus I fear nothing, I am never disturbed, I am full of confidence, I preserve peace in my soul and joy in my heart, although I make no outward demonstration.

What you have remarked in me, then, is not genuine sadness. Neither is there anything in it to create uneasiness in my mother or in the rest of my family. They are not the least surprised at seeing me thus grave and reserved, so long as a smile comes to my lips when I speak or am spoken to. I have never accustomed any one to see in me that demonstrative joyousness observable in others. I limit myself to a

quiet smile, neither forced nor affected, showing a cheerful face to all. I take care not to display too much affection to my parents, in order to avoid attaching their hearts too closely to me. I kiss my mother every day, that she may not doubt my love, but I do not make myself like a slave with her. This would hamper me greatly in the future, as it also would at present. Nevertheless, if she had not the company of my sister, I would devote all my attention to her ; but you will remember what the Saviour Jesus said to me on this point. *

Receive, Monsieur, the assurance of the high consideration with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 5th March, 1843.

LETTER XX.

Marie is comforted concerning her vocation. Eulogium passed upon her by our Lord.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I must confess that I find myself in a very painful situation. My heart is forcibly dragged in two opposite directions. The representations and the considerations that are urged upon me fill me with a thousand fears ; but at the same time I feel so strong an attraction that I cannot resist it.

* Marie is here alluding to our Lord having told her that He had chosen her sister Marguerite to imitate His hidden life at Nazareth, while she was herself to imitate His life of interior solitude with His Heavenly Father. See Letter XVII.

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Ought I to be satisfied with these representations and considerations? Ought I to submit blindly to them? Without doubt, I cannot but obey, I am bound to do so; and yet how am I to resist this attraction, which seizes me and carries me away, which masters and subdues me? What a harassing perplexity! On the one hand, I wish to submit and obey; on the other, obedience seems an impossibility to me, and I feel that I must of necessity follow the movement that impels me and the voice that calls me to another kind of life.

Finding myself, therefore, in this painful and difficult position, I have sounded my heart anew, and have examined my sentiments, in the presence of God, with all simplicity and sincerity. Now, my conscience, unless it be completely blinded and set to sleep, bears me testimony by not reproaching me, as indeed it could not, with resisting the will of my superiors in this matter through pride and obstinacy.* I have felt more and more the force, the energy, of the attraction which calls me to the *Sacré Cœur*, and I see that it is not possible to resist an attraction which is so absolutely master of my heart. But further, in order to free myself from doubt and attain a complete assurance, I addressed myself to the Saviour Jesus. "Lord Jesus," I said, "is Thy will absolute, and dost

* This sentence, as it has been left in the original, may be taken as a specimen of the faulty manner in which Marie occasionally expressed herself. It runs thus: "*Or, ma conscience, à moins qu'elle ne soit complètement avengle et endormie, ne saurait me reprocher, en cette circonstance, ma résistance à la volonté de mes supérieurs comme l'effet d'une orgueilleuse opiniâtreté.*" As the writer's meaning was sufficiently obvious, it may be presumed that the editors considered it more consistent with the rule they had prescribed to themselves not to amend the construction of the passage.

Thou really call me to become a religious at the *Sacré Cœur*?" The Saviour Jesus replied, "My daughter, listen attentively to My words; they are addressed to your pastor, and do you fully report them to him:—

"My son, the interest which you take in Marie is pleasing to Me; for, as it is written in the Gospel, I regard as done to Myself whatever you do for her. I am pleased with the manner in which you act towards her, and if I am pledged to bestow an eternal reward in return for a cup of cold water given to a poor man who asks it in My name, how much more should I recompense what you do for Marie.

"Continue, then, to bestow your care on Marie; you do not know who it is that is committed to your charge. Marie shall one day be the spiritual mother of poor sinners, she shall be the solace of the afflicted, and the light of the ignorant. The voice of Marie shall echo through the world like the voice of a great doctor, and shall combat the enemies of My holy religion. Marie, like a brilliant star, shall shine out from amid the clouds which obscure her, and be made a spectacle to her own country and to distant lands. The inhabitants of Heaven shall gaze upon her and be dazzled by her beauty. Marie shall become the terror of demons, an object of hate, and a confusion to the enemies of My doctrine. Marie shall be persecuted, she shall suffer all sorts of mortifications; but everything shall turn to her sanctification. She is on the point of entering into the deep retirement which I destine for her. Permit her to depart, and you will do what is pleasing in My eyes."

This, Monsieur le Curé, is, in all simplicity, what the Saviour Jesus said to me. You will think what you judge proper of it.

Receive the assurance of the profound respect with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 29th March, 1843.

LETTER XXI.

The Saviour warns Marie that she will fall ill, and will recover on the fourth day. How this prediction was verified.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I know it is your wish that I should hide nothing from you, but should tell you in all sincerity what I have experienced. Here, then, is what the Saviour Jesus one day said to me :—

“My daughter, you will fall ill on Monday, in the first week of May, at eight o'clock in the morning. You will have a fit of vomiting, which will be the prelude to a violent fever. A skilful doctor will come and employ all sorts of remedies without any effect. A great deal of anxiety will be felt about you, but do not be disquieted, you will not die till the time of which I have told you. You will suffer much in this illness ; your mother's solicitous affection will be a great trouble to you. Take care not to repulse her or any of those who come to see you. Have patience, renounce your own will, never complain, you will recover on the fourth day from that on which your sickness began, but your convalescence will be protracted.”

I awaited with anxiety the day that had been men-

tioned. "God," I said to myself interiorly, "wishes thus to give you an assurance that you are not under a delusion ; that it is not the devil who speaks to you and makes sport of you, but the Saviour Jesus who addresses you. If you fall ill on the day and at the hour specified you will be certain that you are not deceived ; but if you continue in your usual health, you will see clearly that you are deluded by the devil." I confess I was in great doubt, and fearful of being deceived. I desired, nevertheless, to prepare myself for undergoing this trial with courage, in case I should discover that I was the dupe of the spirit of darkness. I prayed God to sustain me in the conflict, if I did not fall ill, and to preserve me in perfect peace and tranquillity. I also begged Him, if I was stricken with illness, to give me the strength to bear it patiently and in the way I had been told.

At last the day arrived. I got up. "This," I said to myself, "is the day on which you are to fall ill." I went to make my meditation in the garden. I heard eight o'clock strike, and I was still in perfect health. I immediately left the garden, saying, "Why wait any longer ? I am under a delusion ; I can no longer doubt it. But what matter ? I will have my revenge on Satan ; he shall not have the pleasure of seeing me troubled and agitated. From this day I vow eternal hatred to him. I will avoid with greater heed than ever all manner of sin, and will endeavour to advance more in virtue than in years." After this I returned to my room, weeping, not over what had occurred, but about my death, which perhaps would not happen while I was young. * For, if I was deceived in the

* Our Lord had warned, or rather had promised, her that she should die young. See Letter XXXVIII.

matter of this illness, why should I not be so likewise respecting the time of my decease?

At this instant I seemed to hear the voice of Jesus saying to me: "God alone knows the day and the hour of your death. You know it not; but live every day as if it were to be the last of your life, and thus you will die every day." He added, "Accept all trials with full and entire submission to the will of God." He said also, "Hope in God, and your hope shall not be confounded."

What passed during the days that followed? Ah, Monsieur, I cannot tell you. What struggles, what conflicts, what sufferings! I was no longer myself; I did not know what to do, or what would become of me. Nevertheless, what astonishes and surprises me is that, in spite of everything, I preserved a profound peace in the depth of my soul. I loved God with my whole heart, I would have wished to love Him more, to give myself wholly to Him, and live by Him and for Him for ever. I had even moments of happiness. I found ready access to Jesus; He did not wait for me to go to Him, He hastened to meet me. He loaded me with His caresses, He regarded me with a look full of sweetness. He spoke to me frequently, as though to comfort me, but His words were veiled words, they were figures, images, parables.

All this appeared to me fraught with suspicion; and so much the more because, if, by the special assistance of Jesus, my heart raised itself easily towards God, it also withdrew itself from Him still more easily, and at times even entirely lost all sense of His presence. True, I did not long delay in returning and humbling myself before God, but I suffered much. Sometimes the darkness which overshadowed my mind was so

dense that I saw nothing, and knew not whither to turn or what to cling to. I did not understand what that voice could be which spoke to me. I was tempted to be discouraged, to renounce my interior life, and lead a life wholly exterior. Everything appeared to me to be a delusion, and I endured an unspeakable martyrdom. But then a ray of light would dart into my soul, and instantly I judged quite differently. I said to myself, "Patience," and I waited patiently. The peace of my interior had not been assailed. I stood firm. Nevertheless, I was agitated exteriorly to such a degree that I was utterly prostrated. I could scarcely drag myself along.

On the fourth day, strange to relate, I found myself completely relieved. Great was my astonishment, and I revolved in my mind a thousand different thoughts. But before long light began to wax clearer and brighter in my intellect. My body, indeed, had not been ill, but my soul had been in a veritable fever; and now, as the light shone brightly in my mind, I reasoned thus: The malady of which the Saviour Jesus spoke to me was the malady, not of my body, but of my soul. His words must be understood, not physically, but spiritually. What is the meaning of that hatred of the devil, and of the determined part I have taken against him, if it be not that vomiting of which the Saviour Jesus spoke to me? What is the meaning of that violent fever which was to follow, if it be not the state I have been in for four days past? Who else are that skilful physician and that mother who were to come and lavish their remedies and cares upon me, but the Saviour Himself and His words and consolations, which produced scarcely any impression on my soul and seemed powerless to cure me? In

fine, that protracted convalescence, does it not denote all the evils, and pains, which I must undergo to the very close of my life ?

This, Monsieur, is what I experienced and what I thought. I endured tortures during those days of which I am speaking to you, and I seem to have been taught to support suffering with energy and courage. My mind was also enlightened, and, for my consolation, I was led to see that the Saviour Jesus had meant to speak to me of a spiritual malady. What, moreover, inclined me to think so were the words which I seemed to have heard addressed to me by the Lord : “ Man is always man, and because he is man he acts as a man, he speaks as a man, he sees as a man, he judges as a man, he understands and comprehends as a man ; but God is God, and, because He is God, He acts as God, He speaks as God, He judges as God, He sees as God, He understands and comprehends all as God.”

I abandon all these things to you, as my father and the guide of my soul. You will think what you please of them, or, rather, what the Spirit of God shall suggest to you. I leave all to your judgment and your decision. Forgive me if I have occupied you with things that may be futile. So long as you bid me write down everything, I shall write down everything ; as also I shall stop and say nothing more, whether by writing or by word of mouth, whenever you so direct me.

I entreat you to pray much to God for me. I remain, in our Lord Jesus Christ,

Your very respectful servant,

MARIE LATASTE.

MIMBASTE, 30th April, 1843.

LETTER XXII.

Marie petitions our Lord for M. Dupérier. Our Lord's reply.

MONSIEUR, *

Not having the honour of knowing you except by the praises I have heard of your virtues and merit, I beg you to accept the assurance of my profound consideration and respect.

My venerable pastor informed me of your desire that I should petition the Saviour Jesus on your behalf and communicate to you in writing the reply of the Divine Master. I have done what my spiritual father requested for you, and will now report simply the result.

On the day following that on which your desire was expressed, I awoke, contrary to my usual habit, at day-break. I felt myself well rested from the previous day's fatigue. I got up, thinking that I should thus

* This letter was addressed to M. Dupérier, who sent it to the Abbé Pierre Darbins, Curé of Mimbaste. It is inserted in the order in which it stands in the collection, but there appear to be good reasons for referring it as well as Letter XXIII. to the preceding year. Not only does Marie write as if she had no personal knowledge of M. Dupérier, whereas she had seen him at least once before, in the previous January, but it seems very improbable that he should have written to request her to speak to our Lord on his behalf, and report the answer she received, when he was about to tax her very shortly with being a deceiver, and that on account of a vision with which he must have become acquainted for some time. But if this letter be referred to 2nd May, 1842, it would seem to fall into its proper place; as it would then precede, not only Letter XVI., in which she mentions her interview with M. Dupérier at Dax, but also Letter XIX., which contains allusions to a previous communication between that ecclesiastic and Marie of the character indicated in the present letter.

have a very favourable time for making my meditation. I transported myself, as is my custom, into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and, after having devoutly contemplated the sufferings of His Passion, I thus addressed our Lord : " My Saviour, Thou knowest the commission which my director has given me to Thee. I do not know what prayer I ought to address to Thee ; but do Thou, who knowest the state and the needs of every soul, tell me what will be most suitable for this priest in whose behalf I have recourse to Thee. Pardon my boldness in making this request ; I should never have done such a thing of my own accord, but Thou hast enjoined me to be always obedient in all and for all. Lord, it is to obey Thee that I speak thus. I do not ask this of myself or for myself, but through Thy merits and for Thy great glory ; and I will continue to ask Thee until Thou hast granted my prayer."

The Saviour Jesus hearkened to me with kindness. I was kneeling before Him, and He spoke thus to me : " My daughter, you will say to him who has asked you to pray for him : ' This is what God Almighty, who governs all things by His providence, says ----- ' " Here a thought came to trouble me ; it was this : " Who are you," I said to myself, " that you should receive the words of your God and report them to His minister ? Will you be able to recollect them fully, and not mix up something of your own therewith ? " The Saviour Jesus perceived my hesitation and reassured me, saying, " Fear not, My daughter ; hearken to Me, and be at peace." Then He added, " You will say to this priest, Behold what saith the Almighty Lord, who governs all things by His providence : ' Be of good heart, faithful servant ; cast your eyes on Me who am

your model, and see what I should do in your place. Obey your bishop's voice perfectly as My voice.' My daughter," added the Saviour, "the obedience of this priest will meet its reward. Let him not act as others have acted whom he knows; they had better have obeyed without resistance; they would thus have spared themselves many troubles. He is revolving a number of thoughts in his mind; let him not disquiet himself, but listen to My voice in the depths of his heart. Let him consult on the subject which occupies him, and which I need not mention to you, one grown old in the priesthood, who has experience and an upright judgment; let him divest himself wholly of his own judgment, and submit to the decision made known to him. In acting thus, he will walk in the footsteps of his Saviour, who was subject to Mary and Joseph, and even to the secular powers, and to the soldiers who crucified Him. He who obeys can console himself by saying, 'I am doing the will of my superiors, and consequently that of God.' Let this priest be thus subject to the will of his bishop, and I will cause him to gather a rose from a thorn-bush. Let him, in the office he fills at the Seminary, be full of vigilance, firmness, and gentleness. Let his vigilance prevent abuses, his firmness banish them, and his gentleness gain him the affection of all his pupils. Let him have a great devotion to My Mother, and inspire therewith all who approach him. If, in the course of his life, he finds himself assailed by the contradictions of men, whoever they may be, let him recall to mind the recommendation I have to-day transmitted to him by My little servant Marie, that he may imitate Him whose minister he has the honour to be, knowing well that he will never suffer as much as did his Lord. Let

him take comfort, let him have courage and confidence. He is of the number of My well-beloved. I commend his humility in soliciting your prayers, and receiving through you the grace of an answer from Me. Let him be faithful in obeying it, as he has been humble in asking for it; My eyes shall rest upon him with complacency, and My benedictions shall be abundantly poured out upon his soul."

I have reported and written down everything as accurately as I was able. In conclusion, I beg you, Monsieur, to have the charity to pray for me, that God may grant me the graces which I need, in order ever to accomplish His will and to triumph over my enemies, especially the most obstinate of them, which is, I do not deny it, pride.

Be pleased, I pray you, Monsieur, to receive my assurance of the high consideration with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 2nd May, 1843 (?).

LETTER XXIII.

God enlightens souls in various ways.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

On the 10th of this month, after receiving Holy Communion, I prostrated myself at the feet of the Saviour Jesus, and said to Him, "Lord Jesus, may Thy servant be permitted to ask Thee why Thou dost not reply to the petitions which I addressed to Thee on behalf of M. Dupérier?" The Divine Master

replied, "My daughter, tell this priest not to afflict himself, for I love him."

This reply did not satisfy me. Accordingly, I continued my instances to obtain one of a more favourable character, and to receive the assurance that He would answer M. Dupérier's petitions directly to himself and not through my intervention.

The Saviour Jesus listened to me with kindness. "My daughter," He said to me, "because you are so urgent, I enjoin you to report to him in whose behalf you plead the words which I am pleased now to speak to him through your means: 'My son, marvel not if I have not satisfied your desire. It is not that I am unwilling to teach you for your own good and that of others; you would be the first who, sincerely desiring to be instructed in the knowledge of the truth, should not have received the necessary lights; but I had My designs in not instructing you in the way you desire. I do not instruct all in the same manner. If I have never instructed you sensibly, as I have Marie, it is because there is a great difference between you and her. I require more of him who has received more. I have illuminated your mind, I have enriched it with science, I have rendered it capable of profound and serious reflection. I had placed Marie in a condition where it was impossible for her to receive instruction, and where her mind must have remained unfitted for much reflection; her education, by human means, could not have been such as to qualify and enlighten her sufficiently for the designs I had formed in her regard: this is why I have Myself become her preceptor.

"For yourself, do not expect all from God; avail yourself of what He has given, apply your mind actively in His presence, and He will act in you, by

suggesting to your mind such thoughts and reflections as are needful for you in the situation in which you are placed. In truth, I say to you, ask Me all the questions you please ; I will answer them all, but in the manner which I see fitting. When you have received My answer, that is to say, when light arises in your mind, consult your director and act as he shall tell you. Seek always, O My son, the instruction which you require ; you will find it, according to those words of the Gospel : " Ask, and you shall receive ; seek, and you shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened to you." My son, continue to augment in yourself the treasure of My grace, and advance more and more in the practice of virtue.' "

You will think what you please of this communication. I abandon all to the mercy of God, in Him I place my trust, and by the succours of His grace I feel my strength and courage increase.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my highest consideration, with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 13th May, 1843 (?).

LETTER XXIV.

Marie engages to practise great humility.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I feel it to be impossible ever to thank you for all your goodness to me. The kindness I receive from you, so considerate and so charitable, does but augment the grateful feelings I have entertained towards you

from the time I have been so happy as to have you for my director.

Do not suppose that I say this for mere form's sake or out of politeness: no, Monsieur, I say it most sincerely and in very truth. Certainly I was far from having reason to complain of him who first had the care of my soul, for I was greatly afflicted at his going; but I have experienced, nevertheless, the truth of what Jesus then said to me to console me: "Be not troubled, My daughter, you will bless Divine Providence for this change, and you will see that all will turn out to your good."

I am obliged thus to address you, and to commit these sentiments of my soul to writing, not having found an opportunity of expressing them to you by word of mouth.

No. Monsieur, I am not in the least degree surprised that you should enjoin humility upon me so frequently and with such persistency. I will unite with you in entreating the Lord to bestow it upon me, and will renew my efforts to acquire it. But, alas! I am so weak and cowardly. I am what I would not wish to be, and I have not the strength to be what I ought and would wish to be. I am sometimes all fire, sometimes all ice. To-day I may feel to have the strength of a lion, and to-morrow I am feebleness itself.

What wretched creatures we are in this mortal state, being subject to all these miseries, these vicissitudes and changes! Nevertheless, we must not lose courage. Our God is so good and so merciful. How happy we shall be with Him in Heaven! There, the good will have in it no admixture of evil; we shall love God of necessity, because we shall see Him, and it is impossible to see God and not love Him. There, happi-

ness will have in it no admixture of sadness or affliction ; there, we shall be supremely happy, because we shall possess God, and this possession leaves nothing to be desired. Truly, all we can possibly suffer on earth is small indeed as a means of obtaining this happiness ; nevertheless it suffices. What a consolation for us if our heart is sometimes so violently afflicted on earth ! in Heaven at least we shall be fully compensated for all our sufferings. Yes, O my God, are we not sometimes so even on earth ?

Permit me, Monsieur, I pray you, thus to pour out my heart in the bosom of your charity, and be pleased to receive my very humble thanks for all you do for me. I shall be eternally grateful to you for it ; I shall never forget it : be assured of that. The only way I can show my gratitude is by submission and docility in receiving your salutary counsels and putting them in practice. I will try to do so with the grace of God and the aid of your powerful prayers.

Receive, I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, the sentiments of profound veneration, lively gratitude, and entire submission, with which I have the honour to be,

Your respectful and most obedient servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 17th May, 1843.

LETTER XXV.

Marie must suffer because Jesus is her Spouse and her King.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

Allow me to communicate to you something which the Saviour Jesus said to me ; at least it seems

to me that it was He. You will judge as you think proper, and your judgment will always be the rule of my conduct.

One day, after communion, He spoke thus to me :
“ My daughter, hearken to My words with reverence and submission, for My words are not those of a man, but of a Man-God. Because of the high destiny which I had assigned you, I loved you from the beginning of the world and before it ; I loved you while yet you had no being ; I loved you, and reserved for you, as to the rest of My chosen ones, very special graces.

“ I preserved you from the corruption of the world ; I taught you early to resist the suggestions of the devil and of the enemies of your soul ; I made you feel the power of My grace, which, finding in you a docile heart, was able to work therein with good effect. Then, despite your imperfections, faults, weakness, cowardice and negligence, I caused you to hear My word after a sensible manner, and thus to know My will and My designs regarding you. I chose you for My Spouse ; wherefore you are bound, by this title, so honourable and so glorious, to set Me before you as your model, and to take a share in My pains and sorrows. No, your life ought not to be an easy life, passed amid enjoyments, pleasures, and satisfactions, but a life of toil and suffering.

“ You have yourself chosen Me for your King ; I have therefore a very special right over you on account of your twofold consecration as a virgin and as a Christian. You have made Me the sacrifice of yourself a thousand times : let this sacrifice, then, be a true sacrifice. Inure yourself to a hard and painful life ; never let labour be repulsive to you, but accomplish with good courage whatever Divine Providence shall

ask of you. Harden your body and fortify your soul by means of all those privations which present themselves, and which some time hence shall be considerably increased.

“I said to My Apostles when I was on earth, ‘Watch and pray.’ These words ought to be understood of interior watchfulness, the watchfulness of the soul and of the heart. To you also, My daughter, I have said, ‘Watch and pray’; and it is My wish that you should understand My words in the sense of bodily watchfulness. This is why I have enjoined you to rise at dawn of day, if you be awake, and first make your meditation, then write down My words. This is why I enjoined you to sleep on the floor twice during the week, after obtaining permission of your director. Mortification of the body is, indeed, the strength of the soul. What I desired to see in you was a strong soul, strong against yourself and strong against your passions; strong in regard to your neighbour, and strong in regard to your superiors; strong under the eye of your angel guardian, and strong under the eye of your Father who reigneth in Heaven. Now, this strength is to be found only in tribulation and the mortification of the body.”

All this is not agreeable to our nature, but it is agreeable to God; and it is better to repress nature and please the Lord. Also, it appears to me, that by the help of grace from on high nothing will be able to repel me or to keep me back; everywhere and ever I will welcome suffering as one of the greatest boons which God can send me, since the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and we must suffer like the Saviour Jesus, as much as God wills, in order one day to enter into glory.

I do not forget, Monsieur le Curé, the injunction you gave me to pray for your very reverend spiritual father. I have been doing so already every day ; it was a duty which gratitude prescribed. May I venture to beg you to offer him the expression of my most respectful sentiments and sincerest thankfulness ?

For yourself, Monsieur le Curé, be pleased to accept the assurance of my profound respect and eternal gratitude, with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 25th May, 1843.

LETTER XXVI.

Marie's vocation to the Sacré Cœur.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

Our Lord—so it appears to me—addressed me one day in these words : “ Harken to Me, My daughter : I am the Increated Wisdom ; I know the breadth, and length, and height, and depth of all things, and My words are not idle words, words thrown to the winds. I wish to speak to you of what concerns the salvation of your soul and the interests of My glory. Tell your director, who is in a certain state of indecision respecting the reality and truth of your vocation, that I desire to reassure him, and you also, by imparting to you both My own immovable certainty. Now, I declare to him, and I declare also to you, that your vocation is truly such as you have announced to him. The time which I have fixed, with an absolute will, for the accomplishment of My designs regarding you, is

when you have entered on your twenty-fourth year. Up to that time My will is not absolute ; I abandon it to the will of your director. But when you have reached your twenty-fourth year, My will shall then be absolute ; and nothing ought, nor shall anything be able, to detain you. When I will with an absolute will, I speak as a master, and make Myself obeyed by all hearts.

“ All the wisdom of man, compared with My wisdom, is only folly, and the most learned and enlightened among men is before Me only ignorance and darkness. The will and the judgment of men are fallible and subject to change ; but My will and My judgment are stable and firm. God, My Father, cannot change My judgment, because He is one with Me, and I Myself, who am God like My Father, could not divert the decrees of His justice against men by all I have done and am still doing, by all that has been done or shall be done.

“ True, there are judgments of Mine which are abandoned in some sort to the will of man, so that, if regarded after a merely human manner, it might seem as though My judgments were liable to change. But this is not so. These are trials which God sends to His servants to test their faith and fidelity. Thus God proved Abraham by requiring of him the sacrifice of his son ; thus He also proves a large number of His servants, and no one perceives what it is He does ; but He makes their obedience and submission turn to their advantage. Obedience and submission to the judgments of God obtain judgments of mercy ; whereas the want of faith and submission draws down judgments of justice. All is foreseen by My Father ; nothing is new to Him.”

I beg you, Monsieur, to act in what concerns me as you shall judge fitting. I am ready and disposed for everything, with the grace of God and the help of your prayers. Above all, never fear distressing me or giving me pain in anything or on account of anything.

Accept, I pray you, Monsieur, my assurance of the veneration, gratitude, and submission with which I beg sincerely and respectfully to subscribe myself,

Your very humble but unworthy servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 26th May, 1843.

LETTER XXVII.

Reply to M. Dupérier's objections.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

The letter you read me last Sunday has caused me no pain beyond what I felt at the time. Following your advice, I placed all my confidence in God, I submitted myself without reserve to His holy will, and I experienced a joy and a courage which far outweighed every affliction.

You signify your desire that I should reply to the reasons which have induced M. Dupérier to treat me as a visionary and a deceiver. I should never have done so but for your injunction. You bid me do it, and I obey according to your wish. Neither is it a difficult task : I have only to relate what I have experienced in the new relations which, as it seems to me, I have had with the Saviour Jesus.

On the day after that on which I was made acquainted with M. Dupérier's judgment, I addressed

myself to our Lord, and said to Him with perfect self-abandonment, "Lord, I do not know what turn things are about to take, but, whatever may happen, I place all my trust in Thee. I am ready and disposed without reserve for everything Thou mayst require of me."

"My daughter," replied the Saviour Jesus, "be at peace, and arm yourself with courage. I warned you of trials which you would have to undergo, and this is one; others will follow, even of a more painful kind; but, though you might have to shed your blood for Me, be not troubled; I will be always with you. And, if I am with you, all else ought to appear of small account to you. Let trials, interior and exterior, assail you, let them come upon you and strive to overwhelm you, if I am with you they will not succeed. With Me you will triumph over everything; without Me, were you possessed of the power of all creation, one moment's trial would be sufficient to crush you for ever.

"But, to remove all apprehension from your mind, and banish all fear and trouble, here is the answer to every objection brought against you in the letter which was read to you:—

"1. Minute details, it is said, are found in your writings. But what details? Not a single one is specified. And why should they be called *minute*? There is nothing minute or small in the breathings of the Spirit of God; He blows where He wills, when He wills, and what He wills, and that which is to all appearance smallest has often most important results.

"2. The same is said of your words as of your writings, and this assertion is not better founded. Your words will be found to be actuated by the same

spirit as your writings. So long as no particular objection is alleged you need not care.

"3. You are treated as a visionary on account of the parable * I related to you of the king, the esquire, and the olive-tree. But, to prove to them that it was not the product of your own imagination, here is the true interpretation. He who passed judgment on you has understood a portion of it; that is to say, he rightly judged that by the king you meant to signify God, by the esquire your director, and by the olive-tree yourself. He was mistaken in supposing that you had invented this parable, but he had divined its true interpretation on these three points, the others being hidden from him. I will give you the explanation of them, which you may communicate to him.

"The esquires who laughed at the king's esquire, and who took the olive-tree for a vine, are those who, having heard of you, of your writings, and of the credit given to them by your director, blame or turn into ridicule his zeal and charity in your regard, considering all that you experience as emanating from the spirit of darkness. Those who were poisoned by the perfume of the plant are those who, having consulted you or your writings, do not perform what you enjoin upon them whether by word or by letter.

"The new garden into which it is My wish you should be transplanted is the *Sacré Cœur*, where you shall advance in the accomplishment of My designs regarding you. The golden cage, in which you are to be borne thither, is My sheltering protection. The veil which the king ordered to be thrown over the olive-tree is the secrecy which enshrouds My designs re-

* See Letter XVIII.

specting you and your writings, the object being to prevent anything which might be hurtful to you. The esquire did not put the veil over it, but in this he was not guilty of disobedience, because it was rather a recommendation than a positive command which he received, and anyhow the veil was not intended to hide the olive-tree.

"I need not tell you who they are who, on touching this plant, shall be intoxicated with the odour of its perfume, and shall even die of it. Later this shall be seen. Of these some will be near you and others at a distance; some, again, during your life-time, and others after your death.

"4. You are treated as a deceiver because the prophecy respecting Paris * has not been fulfilled.

"But what is this prophecy? Is it prophesying, to mention in your writings the vision you beheld? You saw in the middle of a large square in Paris a young man standing on a pillar. He was clothed in a red garment, and had a diadem on his head, and a sheathed sword and a bow in his hands. His glances were like lightning, and his lips seemed ready to pour forth menaces. Over his head you saw inscribed, in characters of fire, 'The Destroying Angel.' At this sight you were struck with fear, a feeling of compassion came over you, you addressed yourself in prayer and supplication to God, and He hearkened to your voice as you cried, 'Lord, save Paris! Lord, save the King!' This is what you saw and what you said. Is this, then, a prophecy? and if it were a prophecy, who does not know that there are prophecies which are conditional, especially such as announce the chastisements of God's justice?

* See Letter IX.

"5. You are treated as a deceiver because you affirm that you have a vocation to the religious life, and it is alleged that your vocation has no other foundation but your heated imagination, the effect of want of sleep.

"It is want of sleep, then, which has heated your imagination? No, it is not so. You take all the repose which is sufficient for the health of your body, over which I watch, as well as over that of your soul: this is the reasoning of one who has no solid argument to adduce. Have they not sufficiently tried your vocation? Have they not always found you submissive, docile, patient? What more do they want?

"They say also that your departure and admission into the *Sacré Cœur* are impracticable. But why is your departure impracticable? Have you not the power which others have of walking and going whither God calls you? Do they fear your being exposed to some danger? But am I not there to protect you?

"You cannot, they say in fine, be admitted into the *Sacré Cœur*. But why not? Have I not declared that the Bishop of Aire would request your admission, and that he would not be refused? Have I not said that if he should be unwilling to interest himself in your favour, it would by no means be necessary for him to do so, for that I would Myself provide you a sure entrance into the retreat which I have destined for you? * You are poor, it is true, but I am the

* Our Lord is here speaking with a view to consoling Marie by showing her all the various means by which He can accomplish His purposes in her regard. What He says of the Bishop of Aire is clearly conditional on his being willing to assist her. It was so understood by Marie herself, whom we shall afterwards find telling her director (Letter XLII.) that it is he, and not the Bishop of Aire, who is to procure her admission into the *Sacré Cœur*.

riches of the Sacré Cœur. The faithful souls who there dedicate themselves to honour My Divine Heart, knowing My will as I shall make it known to them, will not reject you.

“They allege no other reasons for treating you as a visionary or a deceiver, because they have no others to give. But, in truth, I say to you, My daughter, strength has here seemed to be changed into weakness and wisdom into folly. Fear not: strength shall be manifested in your weakness, wisdom in your folly, and truth in your visions. The words which you hear do not come from yourself, they are Mine; you only write them down. You are nothing, you can do nothing of yourself; but I am all, I can do all, I regulate all, I take care of all; and the greatest as well as the smallest things enter into the economy of My wisdom, My providence, and My mercy. Let them examine everything attentively in yourself, in your writings, and in your vocation; let them seek for deception and falsehood, they will find only truth. But let them not attempt to scrutinise the designs of My providence; in that they will never succeed. No one will know why I address Myself to you; no one will know why I hold converse with you in the wisdom, the depth, the suavity, and the perfection of My word; no one will know why I call you to the Convent of the Sacré Cœur at Paris, and not to the Convent of the Ursulines at Aire, or any other which it has not pleased Me to choose for you. I do all this because I will to do it, and no one has the right to ask My reason for this My will.”

He ceased speaking, and was silent. Immediately I said to Him, “Lord, the disposition of my mind, at this moment, is that of complete indifference as to all

with which I have been reproached ; it cannot, therefore, be my imagination which has dictated what I have just heard proceed from Thy lips." "No, My daughter, it is I who address these words to you. Go in peace, and keep them in the depth of your heart."

This, Monsieur, is what I heard, and what, as it appears to me, the Saviour said. Of myself I should never have dared, or known how, to answer as I have. You bade me reply to the letter you read to me : of myself, and without your orders, I should not have done so, because I am completely indifferent to its contents. You gave me your orders, and I obey by reporting what I have experienced.

You will forgive me my simplicity : I assure you that I have made the sacrifice of myself to God. My soul, my mind, my heart, my body are consecrated to Him. I no longer wish to belong to myself, I desire to be wholly Jesus Christ's. I hope that He will enlighten me, that He will not forsake me, but will deliver me from all my enemies : to wit, my passions, the world, and the devil. Jesus is my all ; the rest is nothing to me. In whatever condition I may be, whatever trial may come upon me, whatever affliction may befall me, if I have Jesus, if I am united to Jesus, if I love Him, if I can kneel at the foot of His cross, and humble and annihilate myself in His humiliations and annihilation, I am happy, I want for nothing. With Him, I shall have good dispositions and sufficing **graces** ; with Him, I shall correspond to His **graces** ; with Him I shall live, and death shall not be able to reach me ; or, if it strike me, it will be only to give me life and eternity.

Receive, I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, the senti-

ments of respect, submission, and gratitude with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble and unworthy servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 13th June, 1843.

LETTER XXVIII.

Marie no longer sees Jesus. Her sentiments thereon.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

For five or six months past I have had none of those visions which I so often mentioned to you. If they came from the devil, I thank the Lord for not permitting me to be any longer deceived. If they were the offspring of my own imagination, I thank Him for the rest I now enjoy. If they came from Himself, I still thank Him, and, so far from wishing for them again, I acknowledge that I am quite undeserving of them, and my only desire is to attach myself to Him more and more.

I wish for nothing, I no longer see anything, but I hear the words which are addressed to me, and remain upon my guard. Nevertheless, I preserve my tranquillity, abandoning myself to the will of God ; I desire only to love Him. Every day He becomes to me more and more my All in this land of exile. Ah ! Lord, Thou alone canst satisfy my heart.

I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, to receive the assurance of my highest consideration.

Your devoted servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 22nd June, 1843.

LETTER XXIX.

Further particulars respecting Marie's visions. She hears Jesus speaking to her, and her happiness is undiminished.

MOST RESPECTED FATHER,

You desire to know in what manner Jesus has ordered His relations with me ; and here is a true record of what has taken place.

Some time after my first communion I felt my heart all penetrated with a most lively faith in the presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. This faith produced in me an increasing spirit of recollectedness every Sunday and every day in the week on which I had the happiness of visiting the church.

A year later, that is to say, when I was between thirteen and fourteen years of age, I seemed to behold, as it were, a brilliant light over the altar at the moment of the Elevation, but as yet I distinguished nothing clearly. While my eyes gazed upon this splendour, my soul within me was inflamed with love for the God of the Eucharist, and I should have wished to unite myself to Him frequently, at times when I did not enjoy the happiness of communicating.

In proportion as I felt my love for Jesus increase, the light became clearer and brighter. At length, one day I seemed to see Jesus Himself upon the altar. I saw Him, but He was surrounded, as it were, with a cloud of light or of grace ; I could not say what it was.* What happiness was mine ! I fully believed

* Compare Marie's account of this vision as given in Letter II.

in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, but to see Jesus, to contemplate Him with my eyes—what an unspeakable favour, what a felicity for my soul ! I was then seventeen ; it was in the year 1839.

One day when I went to Mass—oh, how great was my sorrow !—I no longer beheld the Saviour. Vainly did I fix my eyes on the altar, I saw neither Jesus nor His light ; I no longer felt my heart drawn towards Him ; it seemed to me that I no longer loved Him as much. Did Jesus wish to punish me for my indifference towards Him, or to withdraw from me a grace which I did not in the least deserve ? I cannot say. Oh, what a grievous trial this was to me ! Nevertheless I endeavoured to submit to the will of God. Soon I overcame my grief, and I said to Jesus, in all the sincerity of my heart, “ Lord, Thy will, not mine, be done.”

At the beginning of the year 1840, on the Feast of the Epiphany, I had the happiness of receiving Holy Communion. I felt within me a happiness such as I had never before experienced. I turned my eyes towards the altar : there, on a chair of gold, Jesus was seated, resplendent with glory and majesty. I saw Him smile benigantly upon me, and I said to Him interiorly, “ Lord Jesus, bless me, and take pity on a poor sinner like me.”

It was my happiness to see Him thus every time I assisted at Mass until the end of 1842.

At the moment of the Elevation, when the priest made his genuflection, after having pronounced the words of consecration, I used to see an exceeding brightness filling the sanctuary, and beheld Jesus appear upon the altar, where He remained until the Communion. His countenance was usually full of be-

nignity and sweetness, but sometimes He looked grave, and seemed to be displeased. His splendour surpassed that of the sun ; His majesty was such that on earth there is nothing comparable to it ; His throne was of the most refulgent gold ; His robe was not formed of any stuff, not even of the finest, or, if it was of stuff, I have never seen the like ; it looked as though it were transparent, and sparkled with light like a diamond or precious stone. He was seated on His throne ; His left hand rested on His Heart, and the right hand reposed gently on His knees. His eyes were generally fixed on the people, and at certain moments—for example, during the *Pater* and the *Agnus Dei*—always on the priest. During this time I was allowed to approach close to the altar, and Jesus spoke to me in the manner I have related. Sometimes He permitted me to draw near to Him : then there was for me no longer railing, or steps, or priest, or altar ; I saw only Jesus, I moved towards Him, advancing as on solid ground. I placed myself on my knees, and He spoke to me with kindness.

After the Communion, Jesus was no longer on the altar. One day I sought Him elsewhere, and found Him in my heart. Now, strange to say, my heart appeared to me like the sanctuary and altar of the Tabernacle. It resembled a small vaulted chamber, in the midst of which I saw a chair of gold, like that of the altar, and Jesus was seated thereon. A balustrade surrounded His throne like that of the sanctuary, only it was neither of wood nor of stone, but of the finest gold. The brilliancy which I had seen on the altar of the church, I now saw in my heart. This is what I beheld. I desired to enter my heart ; I felt a powerful attraction drawing me to penetrate into it,

which I followed. I began to move towards my heart, as though it had been a thing apart from myself, and I penetrated into it as before I had penetrated into the sanctuary of the church.

Sometimes Jesus kept me from Him on my knees before the balustrade which surrounded His throne. Thence He spoke to me as He had upon the altar and during the Holy Mass. I will not here relate the manner in which I beheld my heart, or the precipices which I encountered, and which I often perceived : the different accounts I have given faithfully describe them.

There is still another place in which I beheld Jesus after a sensible manner. When I meditated, I always transported myself to the foot of the Tabernacle, there to pay my homage. When I was praying, whether vocally or mentally, my attraction would draw me to penetrate into the Tabernacle, and there again I found Jesus as upon the altar, and as in my heart after communion. I beheld Jesus, I was within the Tabernacle with Him, I spoke to Him, I was on my knees at His feet, or standing before Him, and He discoursed with me as was His wont.

Since 1842 I have no longer seen Him after a sensible manner, but I hear His voice distinctly, as I did before. He prepared me for this privation by saying to me, " My daughter, do you remember the affliction you experienced when I hid Myself for a time from your eyes after having manifested Myself to you ? You must now be possessed of more fortitude, vigour, and energy. I mean no longer to treat you like a child. I mean no longer to give you milk for your nourishment, but strong and solid food. Yet a little while, and you will no longer see Me, but you will continue

to hear My voice and My words ; again a little while, and you will not even hear Me any longer ; then again you will see Me and hear Me once more."

Jesus said to me that I must no longer be like a child, but indeed I was so still, for I cried a great deal when He told me that I should see Him no longer. He came to me and consoled me, saying, " My daughter, do not weep, dry your tears and be comforted ; you will no longer see Me in a sensible form, but I shall be really present in the Tabernacle, on the altar, and also in your heart. You can pay Me your homage there, and I shall accept it with as much pleasure as heretofore, for I shall still love you, and shall always love you, although you may no longer receive sensible marks of My love by a visible manifestation of Myself. I shall witness your groans, your prayers, and your petitions. I will be your help, your support, and your stay. Have confidence, My daughter ; always obey your director, practise submission, offer yourself to God every day ; imitate My actions with increasing fidelity, and I will give you graces more precious than those which you have received. My daughter, I bless you." At the same moment He raised His hand over my head, and I felt as it were floods of grace and of happiness inundate my whole soul, freeing it from all distress and disquietude, and fortifying it as though with a shield that was intimately one with itself.

For some days, although I had no grief or sorrow in my heart, I felt like one in a strange land, all bewildered by a mode of life which was quite new to me. I no longer enjoyed the sight of Jesus, but I had His word ; I no longer enjoyed His sensible presence, but I had still the sweetness of His grace ; I reposed with delight in the immensity of God.

The words of Jesus had no longer, in their tone, expression, or their import, the same sweetness as I had found in them when I used to see Him, but they consoled, supported, strengthened, and protected me. His voice still instructed me, but this instruction more often concerned the defence of my life * than the education of my soul. It was the instruction, or, rather, it was the pleading of the truth, as to His relations with me at times when I was so severely tried. It was then that He suggested to me a reply to all the objections which M. Dupérier proposed to me through you. His voice, ever since that time, is a light not only for myself but for others. It tells me, not only what passes in myself, but also what passes in others. It is this voice which has made me very often know your thoughts, and also those of M. Dupérier, and of the Bishop, as you may yourself have perceived by the answers I made you. Thus, as Jesus assured me, far from having lost by the subtraction of His sensible presence, I have gained much. I have gained in firmness, in courage, in light, and in a fuller communication of truth.

Ever since, when I rise in the morning, I offer to God my day, my actions, all that I have and all that I am. I hold myself each morning in readiness to meet the trials which may arise. I make my meditation, in which I listen to the voice of Jesus ; I keep myself always in the presence of God ; from time to time in the course of the day I pay Him my homage of adoration and love ; I keep myself united to Him. I address my prayers to God, and I do so, as it appears

* Marie means that she was furnished with arguments in vindication of her assertions with regard to her call to the religious life and similar matters.

to me, with more calmness and freedom ; I might even say, with more fervour. I raise myself towards God, and lose myself in His immensity. Thus, let me be deprived of all consolation, all satisfaction, all happiness, possessing God I desire nothing more ; my happiness and my bliss are to have no other joy but the possession of God.

Whatever affliction may befall me, I say to myself, " Yet a little while and all will be ended ; let us not refuse the cup full of gall and bitterness, let us drink it in long draughts : it is the chalice which contains health, it is the germ of eternal life and of union with Jesus." Thus, nothing shall be able to shake me, I shall remain always united to Jesus, awaiting patiently the hour in which He will accomplish His designs regarding me. I am not worthy to be used as His instrument. Let Him do what He wills, I am ready for everything. He said to me one day, " My daughter, the designs of God are admirable and hidden from men. You are, as it were, a fountain, a basin, which God has formed with His own hands and desires to fill with His graces, that numerous souls may come and draw therefrom. You are, as it were, wax which I knead by My word and mould by tribulation, and which I will form into a magnificent flambeau to enlighten the souls which after your death shall desire to love Me. This flambeau shall remain at first under a bushel, but I will cause it to shed its light abroad, and it shall dispel the darkness." It was thus He spoke to me : His will be done, I have but one desire, the accomplishment of His will. I seek not the glory or the approbation of men ; I seek only the good pleasure of God.

A time will come when in all probability I shall no longer hear the voice of Jesus. This will be the an-

nouncement of my approaching death, seeing He has assured me that yet a little while after and I shall hear Him and shall behold Him face to face. Blessed time ! for, as I hope, I shall be united to Jesus ; He will forgive me my sins and my negligences, that I may be permitted to love Him evermore.

This is a very long letter, Monsieur le Curé ; I have spoken to you the very truth of my mind, and with that complete freedom to which you have accustomed me.

I pray you to accept the sentiments of profound respect with which I am,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 24th June, 1843.

LETTER XXX.

Marie fears she may love the Saviour Jesus after too sensible a manner. He reassures her.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

My object in writing is to submit to you my relations with the Saviour Jesus. You have several times desired me to give you information on this subject ; and I beg you not to suppose that it has been owing to any unwillingness on my part if I have not done so already.

Some questions you proposed to me led me to think of what had never before occurred to my mind. The reflections thus suggested excited fears in my soul, and I asked myself whether my love for Jesus were pure. A few days ago, the kindness He has never ceased to

show me induced me to speak to Him of my trouble. I drew nigh to Him, and said, "Lord, I am in great affliction." He replied, "What is it?" "Lord," I said, "I fear that the love I have for Thee is not pure, and the thought is very painful to me." The Saviour smiled sweetly on me, and said, "Well, My daughter, but who is there who loves Me with a pure love?" "Lord," I answered, "no one has so much to reproach himself with as I have. I am all sin and corruption, I am sensibly conscious of the disorder and depravity that is in me ; but Thou art purity and sanctity itself : ought I so much as to approach Thee ? O Lamb without spot, Thou unitest in Thyself all perfections, Thou art possessed of all that is most lovable, and of all that is capable of ravishing hearts and captivating souls ; it is impossible to see Thee and not love Thee. My Saviour and my God, has my love for Thee been pure and unsullied ? I have beheld Thee with the eyes of my soul and of my body as sensibly as did that Mary of whom the Gospel speaks. Thou art holy, and I am a sinner ; Thou art just, and I am a criminal : O my Saviour and my God, has my love for Thee been pure and unsullied ? I have renounced all natural and earthly affection, I should reproach myself if I nourished a single such affection in my heart ; I love only Thee, I have no affection but for Thee, I love Thee as much as my heart is capable of loving. Thou hast Thyself said to me, and I feel the truth of Thy word, that the human heart is not sufficient to itself ; I have desired to rest my heart, not on flesh and blood, but on Thee who art the Thrice-Holy God ; I have chosen Thee for my portion and the repose of my heart, that I may live, so far as I am able, in holiness. My Saviour and my God, answer me : has my love for

Thee been pure and unsullied? or has my love for Thee, and for Thy Humanity which has manifested itself to me, been too sensible and too natural? Have the testimonies Thou gavest me of Thy goodness and of Thy love produced in me a love which was not conformable to Thy will? O my Saviour, instruct and enlighten me. Let me banish, reject, and abhor everything which Thou wouldst banish, reject, and abhor, that I may bless Thy Name for ever and ever." I ceased, and my angel answered *Amen*.

Then the Saviour addressed to me these words: "My daughter, I love your simplicity, your candour, and your innocence. You have spoken to Me with confidence, as I have so often exhorted you to do; continue still to act thus, and you will find with Me tranquillity and peace, because I will manifest the truth to you.

"They who have the direction of you are bound in conscience to examine and carefully consider what passes within you, in order that they may be able to forewarn you against the snares of the devil. And you are yourself bound in conscience to make everything known to them, in order that they may be able to form a judgment regarding you and guide your steps in the right way. Notwithstanding your good-will, there are things which would remain concealed in you because you would never think of disclosing them. Then, for My own glory and for your good, I turn the eyes of your director to them, in order that he may question you and that nothing may remain unperceived. Wherefore, My daughter, whatever questions may be proposed to you, always remain calm, and preserve peace within yourself; preserve it above all in relation to the particular favours which I have accorded you and the

testimonies of affection which I have given you. There is nothing in this which you ought to banish, reject, or abhor.

“I am your father, your spouse, your God. I have a right to your love as your father, your spouse, and your God ; I have a right to receive from you testimonies of this love ; I have a right that you should attach your heart to My heart, and never separate it therefrom. I have this right as your father ; the heart of a father and that of his child ought to form only one heart. I have this right as your spouse ; the heart of a spouse and that of his bride ought to form only one heart. I have this right as your God ; your heart ought to be so united to Me as no longer to belong to yourself, but that you should abandon it entirely to the movements of grace.

“Now, My daughter, I render you this testimony : you love Me as your father, as your spouse, as your God, and your love has ever been conformable to My will ; that is to say, it has been a holy love. Why, then, should you fear that there has been something too human and too natural in your love ? Is it because you have felt joy and happiness overflowing your heart ? But this is the very reward which I bestow on those who love Me. Is it because you feel your love for Me ever increasing, and you fear never to attain to that high degree which you ought to reach in order to be pleasing to Me ? But, My daughter, the support, the life, the increase, the perfection of love is to love on, to love always, and never to cease loving. And would you not deserve My severest reproaches if you did not feel your heart cleave to Me when I cause you to hear My word, when I manifest Myself to you, when I permit you to prostrate yourself at My feet, when I con-

sole you in your affliction, when I load you with My most signal favours ?

“ The fear you have in your soul is a most convincing proof of the purity of your love ; it is a sure token that your love for Me is such as it ought to be, pure and holy. Despise the artifices of the devil, who will seek to trouble you only that he may separate you from Me. Ever increase your love for Me, and it will ever increase in purity and sanctity. To this end, repose, not in your sentiments of affection for Me, but in the affection which I have for you ; repose, not in your love for Me, but in My love for you. Love Me by so forgetting your love as only to remember My love for you ; love Me, and deposit your love for Me in My heart, that I may deposit in your heart My love for you.

“ You have still much to do, My daughter, in order to love Me as I desire to be loved ; fear to displease Me, by not following the movements which I communicate to your heart. Nevertheless, submit those movements to your director ; it is My will that he should ratify every word of Mine by his own, so that you may have the merit of a double obedience.”

Forgive my simplicity, Monsieur le Curé. In reporting to you this conversation with the Saviour Jesus, I have expressed to you my heart's most intimate sentiments in regard to the Divine Master at such times as He manifests Himself to me. I submit it to your lights ; judge thereof for the greater glory of God and the spiritual profit of my soul.

Be pleased to receive, I pray you, the homage of my most profound respect and liveliest gratitude.

I have the honour to be, Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 30th June, 1843.

LETTER XXXI.

Of spiritual communion.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

It is in obedient submission to your wish that I communicate to you a new favour which Jesus is pleased to accord me. He desires to give Himself to me by spiritual communion several times during the day.

I said to Him, "Lord, how often dost Thou desire that I should receive Thee by spiritual communion?" The Lord replied, "My daughter, you will communicate spiritually on rising in the morning, and then after your morning prayer, as you are in the habit of doing; you will also communicate again twice during the day, and, finally, after your evening prayers. I desire to enter your heart five times a day by spiritual communion."

I added, "What preparations, Lord, are required for these communions?" "My daughter, the preparation for spiritual communion is not at all difficult; it is not necessary for you to make all the acts appertaining to sacramental communion. Recollect yourself for a moment, present yourself before My Tabernacle, and say to Me, 'Lord Jesus, come down into my heart.' That is enough. But in each spiritual communion you should always propose an end to yourself; such, for example, as to obtain some grace or particular virtue. You can also communicate spiritually for the intention which I suggested to you for your sacramental communions; namely, that of obtaining from God, My Father, by My merits, and by the communion you are making, the necessary graces to know and

perfectly fulfil His holy will. Though you should never have any other intention but this, it would always be agreeable to Me."

When the Saviour had thus spoken, the thought occurred to me to ask how I ought to behave in regard to these spiritual communions on the days when I should have the happiness of communicating sacramentally. The Saviour Jesus replied, "My daughter, you will please Me by communicating spiritually, even on those days, in the manner which I have shown you. You cannot receive too often within you the virtue and the grace of the Sacrament of My Love."

My intention was to tell you this by word of mouth, but the Saviour Jesus bade me give it to you in writing.

I told you a little while ago how happy I was ; indeed, the happiness I experience at times is inexpressible. How tender a father God is ! He hastens to alleviate, and even to dispel, by the unction of His grace, which heals, sustains, and fortifies, those pains which will come at times to afflict my heart and disquiet my mind. Love Him, bless Him, thank Him, for me, I pray you ; entreat Him to preserve me from everything which could displease Him.

I beg you, Monsieur le Curé, to receive the sentiments of gratitude, obedience, and respect which I here present you, together with the assurance of my highest consideration.

Your very humble and most unworthy servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 6th July, 1843.

LETTER XXXII.

Our Lord's designs respecting Marie's writings.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

You have bidden me write down what I have experienced, and, to obey you, I have done so. I have given you permission to make whatever use of my writings you shall deem proper, after having examined them sufficiently to ascertain the principle from which they proceed. I give them up entirely to you. I am conscious that it is not by my own powers that I have written all that I have handed over to you, because of myself I know nothing, and what I learned of my mother in my infancy or of my first pastor is far below what is contained in my papers. All that is in them belongs to the Saviour Jesus, or to him who taught it me ; and, if he be not the Saviour, I know not who he is.

Whoever he be—I do not decide, you shall yourself be the judge—this is what he said to me respecting these papers : “ My daughter, things the most hidden shall be one day known ; and what is said to-day in the silence of My sanctuary or of your heart shall be published on the house-tops. That which happened in the case of My disciples shall happen also in yours.

“ You are not the only one, My daughter, who shall hear My word ; others also shall hear it ; but I have not chosen them to make it known to the world ; My choice has fallen on you. All that I have said to you shall be disseminated through the world, and very many shall profit thereby. They who are in trouble shall find peace in My words as reported by you ; they who are in a state of tepidity shall find therein energy

and strength ; they who are in unbelief shall find therein faith ; they who are in despair shall find therein confirmation in the truth ; in fine, they who are in death shall find therein life.

“ Behold, My daughter, what good you will effect by your submission to the will of your director. It was I who inspired him, I repeat it, to order you to write, and, as he bade you, so I Myself bid you, to omit nothing, to neglect nothing, to write down everything. Do not concern yourself as to the manner in which you shall express it. My Evangelists had no knowledge of letters, neither have you ; I will make up for that.

“ To do all this, you are obliged to impose privations on yourself, to write by night, when no one sees you, or in the fields, when you keep watch over your flocks : but do not desist. If I reward a cup of cold water given to a poor man, how much more shall I not recompense you for your privations and your pains ? Thus I shall imprint more deeply on your mind the conversations I have held with you, and you will impart to others of your abundance. I will make your name famous among those who are devoted to the Sacrament of My Love ; I will show them how signally I have displayed My mercy towards you, and they will render thanks to God for the favours He has done you.

“ Let not your modesty lead you to suppress these words. I have a settled purpose in addressing them to you. It is My wish that you should make them known to your director, in order that they may turn to My glory. I forbid you, however, to say anything to any one except him. Live ever humbly, and fear lest, after being loaded with My choicest favours, you should fall into the eternal abyss.”

Monsieur le Curé, if it is the Saviour Jesus who addressed these words to me, I pray you to believe that my greatest desire is to accomplish His holy will, and to labour as much as is in my power for His glory. If it is not He, I will none the less do your will : to you I leave it to judge how, in what way, and at what time you may be able to make profitable use of my papers, or whether it is not better to destroy them.

Whatever you do will be well done, for I am certain that you will do nothing save by the movement of the Spirit of God.

Accept, Monsieur le Curé and my kindest father, the devoted and most respectful homage of

Your humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 22nd October, 1843.

LETTER XXXIII.

Marie complains to the Saviour and is consoled. Her mode of making her meditation.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

For some time past I have scarcely known what state I was in. Sometimes I see things so clearly, I feel them so deeply, and then I am filled with such violent fears that it would seem as though I were going to die. One day I thus deposited my griefs in the Heart of Jesus : "O Jesus, my amiable Saviour, have compassion on me. O my tender Father, suffer me to pour forth my heart in the bosom of Thy mercy with the confidence and simplicity of a child. Thou alone, O my God, knowest all that I feel within me,

all that I experience. The sorrows, the tribulations, and the anguish of my soul are very great, but Thou comest to console, to fortify, to sustain, and to defend it. A thousand thanks be for ever rendered to Thee, O God infinitely good and bountiful.

“Lord, do not take what I am about to say as the murmur of a rebellious heart, but as the complaint of a child who makes a loving appeal to its father. Wherefore, my sweet Saviour, dost Thou cause me to feel all these things; things which sometimes are so extraordinary and surprising that they occasion me terrible trials and every kind of humiliation? To please and obey Thee I have always sacrificed everything; I have always consented, for the love of Thee, to pass in the eyes of men as one foolish and demented, and never to take offence at their opinion of what I said to them. But how long, Lord, wilt Thou leave me in my present condition? I am as one without life, and yet I find not death. I languish like a plant that is withering up, but still remains where it is. When shall I see, Lord, the fulfilment of Thy promises? When wilt Thou show Thyself as my God, my protector, and my defender? Oh, let me never be deceived in the hope I have placed in Thee! Yes, my Saviour and my God, I hope in Thee, I hope in Thy mercy, I hope in Thy love and Thy charity, I hope in Thy Divine providence, in Thy strength and Thy support, I hope in Thy words and Thy promises, I hope because Thou hast bidden and commanded me to hope. My hope can repose only in Thee, because Thou art God, Thou art the Saviour, Thou art the friend of the weak, the consoler of the afflicted, the life of him who is ready to die, and the bliss of him who loves Thee. Yes, I hope in Thee, and my hope

shall not be confounded. Nevertheless, happen what may, I will never cease saying to Thee, 'Lord Jesus, Thy will, not mine, be done.' "

I was in the church before the Blessed Sacrament. Immediately that I had pronounced these words I was filled with such abundance of grace that I became, as it were, immovable and deprived, so to say, of all sensation. The Saviour Jesus then said to me with dignity, "One time is past, there remains but the remembrance of it ; another time will come, and My mercy shall display itself. O ye blind ; ye have the torch in your hand, and ye see not the light. How, then, will they fare who are without light ? O senseless men ; ye see things, and ye do not understand them. Might I not say to you, as to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, 'O slow of heart to believe' ? Your exalted minds cannot occupy themselves with these fancies. Blush, O ye children of Israel, for the little ones shall become great, the ignorant shall become learned, and the blind shall see more clearly than ye. Ye turn a deaf ear because the trumpet that sounds is of clay. It shall become a trumpet of gold, the piercing tones of whose voice shall penetrate into hearts the coldest and most insensible." *

I well understood these words of the Saviour, which others perhaps will not understand ; but my heart was not yet reassured.

The Saviour continued : " My daughter, fear not, rely upon Me in all these things. They concern Me more than they do you. I can easily make them turn

* Allusion is here made to the opposition which men of high theological attainments were offering to Marie's vocation, and thus to our Lord's secret designs in glorifying Himself by means of this humble soul. See also Letter XLVI.

to My glory. For, if you are ignorant of the thoughts of men, I know them, and I penetrate to the depths of their hearts. Among men there are some who appreciate those things which I am operating in you ; others are content with admiring ; and some, again, disdain and despise them. Let men think as they will ; you are what you are, and, in the day of light, that which I am working through you will appear in its reality. Let them act according to their fancy ; it is not you who will have to render an account to Me of their actions.

“ For yourself, My daughter, always faithfully report both My words and your own sentiments ; whether what I say be for or against you, whether you deem it extraordinary or extravagant, wise or prudent, I command you to conceal nothing. Show yourself, in all your woman’s weakness, stronger and more courageous than men. My daughter, go in peace.”

Ever since the Lord Jesus addressed those words to me, I seem to feel in my soul increasing sentiments of love, of confidence, and of hope in Him, in proportion as the light grows, increases, and expands. What He desires to operate in me has had a beginning ; I see it developing and I shall see it reach its end.

I will conclude by speaking to you of my meditation. It is, properly speaking, nothing but a simple elevation of my mind towards God, without considerations, without reflections, without affections, without resolutions.

This is how I make my meditation, following always the attraction which is given me : I raise my soul towards God, I unite myself to Him, as my principle and my end. My whole occupation is to keep myself united to Him purely and simply, to repose tranquilly

in His Infinite Being, and to receive the different operations of His grace. However, I never close my meditation without making Him an oblation of all my actions, or without recommending to Him my neighbours, both generally and in particular, soliciting for them, as for myself, the graces and benedictions of God.

Vocal prayer is fatiguing to me, sometimes even when I form the words only in my heart without pronouncing them with my lips. However, I repeat those which are obligatory on me, but commonly, when I offer my petitions to the Lord or express to Him my sentiments, I do it in a silent manner.

I commend you very specially to God every day ; gratitude makes it my duty to do so. Neither do I ever forget M. Dupérier, and I pray the Lord to shower down on you both His most abundant benedictions.

I know, Monsieur, that you do not forget me in your prayers, and that you desire to proportion them to the needs of my soul, which are so great and so pressing. Continue still to afford me this spiritual succour, cease not to implore the mercy of God, and beg Him to have compassion on me. You will thus make it easy for me to support all the troubles and afflictions of my life.

Pardon, I pray you, the length of my letter ; I feel that I often abuse your charity.

Accept the assurance of my high consideration, with which I have the honour to be, Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble, obedient, and grateful servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 1st November, 1843.

LETTER XXXIV.

Vision of the beast of the marsh.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

One Sunday, at Holy Mass, I was unable to unite with the priest, or to read or pray. I perceived in myself a light wholly interior and spiritual, which, while manifesting God to me, drew my soul towards Him as towards its principle, and God, in communicating Himself to my soul, attached it to Him by the sweet bonds of His grace. It seemed to lose itself in that boundless immensity, that All which is incomprehensible, that ocean of perfection.

After receiving Holy Communion, I opened the door of my heart ; I admitted my angel within, and went to meet Jesus, who came all resplendent with glory. I prostrated myself at His feet, and acknowledged myself unworthy to receive Him into my heart. Then, rising, I said to Him, "Lord, how admirable is Thy beauty !"

When we reached the door of my heart He said to me, "Would you wish Me to show you a wonderful sight ? descend." I descended by a ladder which stood quite upright, and Jesus descended after me. We came to a marsh, the depth of which was not very great, as the grass appeared above the surface. Jesus placed Himself on a plank which was there, and I placed myself on another. Now, beneath the water I beheld a countless multitude of little creatures resembling serpents, scorpions, and other animals with which I was not acquainted. Then I saw issue from out the mire an enormous beast, which set up loud cries ; upon which all the creatures lifted up their heads and came

out of the marsh in the train of the one which had set up these cries. On an eminence which was above the marsh I beheld a wide expanse, in which a numerous multitude was moving to and fro. The beast which had come out from the mire of the marsh exhaled a dense black smoke from his nostrils and his mouth ; it went and stationed itself in the midst of the space, and the other smaller beasts intermingled with the crowd.

On the northern side, towards which the beast had turned, I saw a very wide bridge, one end of which inclined a little towards the east and the other towards the west. In the middle of the bridge there was a stone staircase of about ten feet wide and thirty high, which led up to the high ground. On the bridge I saw a parapet, against which the water which came from the other side dashed violently, so as to break over the place. Every one took to flight in consternation ; and I saw on the bridge a large number of people coming and going in all directions with hurried steps.

At length I beheld a numerous procession advance from the western side, headed by priests, with a cross borne before them ; I do not know whether there were any bishops among them. Another procession arrived by the staircase which was in the middle of the bridge. The multitude was very great. They proceeded towards the place of which I have spoken ; the beast did not move. It was surrounded by priests, and I believe also by bishops, but they did not venture to touch it.

Then there appeared on the bridge a man seated on an elephant, who advanced boldly, holding in his hand a double-edged sword. He seemed to be exceedingly powerful ; he was clothed in a garment which did not

descend quite to his knees. It was not formed of any stuff, but it appeared to be solid, like the diadem which he wore on his head. He passed through the crowd, and advanced close to the beast, having in one hand his sword and in the other a cross. "Thou infernal monster!" he said; "let us see which of the two be the stronger! Look at this cross! wilt thou dare to raise thyself against it? All thy might shall be brought to naught." At the same instant he rushed upon the beast, and plunged his sword into its mouth, so that its point came out at its back. Whereupon the beast retreated into the marsh from which it had issued.

Then this man received all sorts of congratulations from the multitude, who burst forth into transports of joy. He planted the cross which he bore in his hand on the very spot where the beast had been seated, and they who had been wounded in their feet or their arms by the other and smaller beasts which had come out of the marsh went to prostrate themselves before the cross, and returned healed. But I saw a great number, among whom were some ecclesiastics, lying stretched on the ground without life, because these beasts had wounded them in the heart or in the tongue.

In fine, he who had made the beast retreat into the marsh caused the opening to be closed by which the water had burst in upon the place. He caused also a high wall to be built, and a large picture to be placed thereon representing the beast transfixed by the lance. Then all retired in procession on the side of the bridge which was turned towards the east. For myself, I made an act of thanksgiving and withdrew.

You will form what judgment you think proper of

this vision. I have reported to you faithfully what I saw.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 6th November, 1843.

LETTER XXXV.

Marie is instructed concerning interior lights.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I am going to communicate to you, and submit to your judgment, a matter which has consoled me much. For some time past I had received various lights and intimations which made such a deep and lively impression on my mind as to cause me no little suffering. Accordingly, I one day addressed myself to our Lord, and said to Him, "Saviour Jesus, vouchsafe, I pray Thee, to enlighten me; teach me how to behave, and how to accept these divine lights and intimations which my mind receives regarding persons and their actions. My heart is consumed with the desire of Thy glory; my soul burns with love for Thee and for my brethren. Lord, how ought I to conduct myself, experiencing what I do? Thus far Thou hast had the goodness to instruct me; leave me, then, not in ignorance as to this matter, and I will testify my gratitude by a greater love and a blind obedience."

The Saviour replied, "My daughter, you know that I am acquainted with the lights which are manifested to you?" "Yes, Lord, and I believe that Thou knowest them better than I do myself." "These

lights do not diminish or weaken the love which you have for God and for your neighbour?" "No, Lord." "Well, My daughter, whatever these lights may be, refuse them not; whether they enlighten you respecting profane or sacred things, the religious condition, the virtues or the vices, of governments and peoples, of nations in general or of individuals in particular; even when they disclose to you the dispositions, the sentiments, and the secret designs of persons who are known to you, and with whom you have intimate relations, do not reject them, but use much discretion. Nothing can be hidden from God; He knows the depths of all hearts; and therefore, when He wills and judges it fitting, He can impart the knowledge thereof to whom He pleases. Accordingly, when God shall manifest to you the interior state of a person, and you see him such as he is, do not imagine that in thus seeing him you are rashly judging him. There is a great difference between rash judgments and these kinds of light or knowledge which are imparted to you.

"Rash judgment has its source in a bad principle, which is pride and jealousy; and it produces evil effects, namely, contempt and disgrace of your neighbour. But the lights and intimations which you receive have a very different source, namely, God; and the effects they produce are also quite different, being the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

"When you receive these kinds of lights, examine whence they come and whither they tend. If you perceive that they proceed from your self-love, or from some evil prejudice against the person whom they concern; if you perceive that they tend to diminish the love you owe him, reject those lights. But if they produce in your heart a charitable compassion, joined

with a sincere desire for God's glory, accept them whatever they may be. Nevertheless, do not let your charitable feelings prove an obstacle to the will of God, signified to you by the lights which it pleases Him to give you. Be not attached to these lights or intimations. Raise your mind to God, and offer Him a heart submissive to whatever He may will.

"Among the lights which are imparted to you, some are clear and bright, others are less bright, and some are a little obscure; receive them without disquietude, and be assured that all will be accomplished in its own time.

"I have great designs regarding you, and it is necessary that I should enlighten you and prepare you a long time before, that, when the moment shall have come, you may be ready to accomplish the will of God.

"Never communicate these lights to any one without My command or permission. You would expose yourself to a thousand troubles and embarrassments by your disobedience and indiscretion.

"You must have a large heart, in order that it may contain all that I desire to enclose within it; a strong and firm mind, that it may preserve the due balance which wisdom, prudence, moderation, and discretion prescribe. Establish yourself in a profound humility; but do not let this humility make you timid, or lead you to conceal that in your life which it is My pleasure should be made known. Let your humility consist in your sentiments rather than in your acts, strengthening you against everything which might be the most likely to tempt you to vanity. Arm yourself with courage; let a holy intrepidity enable you to surmount all that might involve peril to your life, excite feelings of repugnance in your heart, or be a burden to your mind, when it is question of fulfilling

My will. Ever place in Me all your confidence, and await patiently God's own time."

Since receiving these instructions, which were most necessary to me, I feel relieved. By enlightening my mind, the Saviour Jesus has fortified my heart and made my position much easier.

Accept, I pray you, the assurance of my high consideration, with which I have the honour to be, Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 9th November, 1843.

LETTER XXXVI.

*An ecclesiastic * warned that he will have to undergo much suffering. He is exhorted to pray for France.*

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I have done what you told me, and here is the answer of the Saviour Jesus :—

"My daughter, why should I not speak to those who desire to hear My word, seeing that I address Myself even to those who care but little about it? Tell him who has consulted Me that I love him, and that he is loved of My Father ; and then, in My name and on account of My love and My Father's love for him, address to him these words : 'Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye just, and glory all ye who are right of heart.† My son, I apply to you these words so full of sweetness ; receive them as from the lips of your Saviour. Be not astonished ; what you have seen is nothing in comparison with what you shall

* M. Dupérier.

† Psalm xxxi. 11.

hereafter see. You shall have trials, and then peradventure you will find but little consolation in creatures. Usually, I act thus in order to draw afflicted hearts towards Me ; but for you, this is not the motive of the troubles which await you. I already possess your heart ; why should I seek to gain it, seeing that it is even now My property by the gift you have made Me of it ?

“ Nevertheless, I shall permit these afflictions for your greater perfection ; for then, through the mutual effusions of your heart and Mine, through the communication which you will make to Me of your troubles or afflictions and I to you of My consolations, our union will become more close and firm. Be not like those senseless ones who lean upon an arm of flesh too weak to support itself. These men are deceived in their hopes, because they have placed their reliance on feebleness and nothingness. You have had experience of this : earthly friends often forsake you the moment you have most need of them. Be wise, My son, and let your wisdom lead you to seek in Me your closest friend.

“ I warn you that you shall have much to suffer still,—but I promise also to sustain and comfort you. Perhaps you will begin to ponder in your mind what the troubles may be that await you : they will be such as you least expect ; but you will acknowledge the truth of My words when you come to experience them. Then your mind and your heart will turn towards Me, and you will say, “ Ah, Lord, I acknowledge the truth of what Thou didst say to me ; help me, comfort me ! ” and I will come to help and comfort you.’ ”

Then the Saviour Jesus added, “ My son, pray for France. I have already said, and I love to repeat it, that if the strokes of My Father's justice have not yet fallen on her, it is Mary, the Queen of Heaven, who

has withheld them. Satan roars from the depths of Hell against a kingdom which, in truth, has dealt him rude blows ; he is convulsed with rage when he beholds the good done in that country ; he directs all his efforts to augment the evil, and to provoke still more the Divine vengeance. But a chain which he cannot break holds him captive ; for My Mother has a special right over France, which is consecrated to her, and, in virtue of this right, she arrests the vengeful arm of God, and pours upon it the benedictions of Heaven, that it may produce good more abundantly. This is why I cease not to warn, in order to avert unspeakable calamities. O France ! thy glory shall spread afar ; thy children shall go forth beyond the vast expanse of ocean, and those who know thee only by name shall pray for thy preservation and prosperity.

“ My son, I have spoken to you with the familiarity of a friend and the tenderness of a father. Marvel not if in doing so I have addressed to you words which you did not expect ; often the confidences of one friend to another embrace what he never would have guessed. Listen now to My exhortations : Every time you offer the Holy Mass pray for the welfare and preservation of France. Accept with patience and submission all the trials which it may please Me to send you. Detach yourself more and more from creatures, and make Me your most intimate friend. In fine, pray for My little servant Marie, through whom I transmit to you My words ; she has need of prayers because of the numerous troubles that await her. Receive, My son, the kiss which I give you in My mercy.”

Monsieur le Curé, I know not into whose hands this letter may one day fall, but, since there is in it mention of France, I will permit myself to add what

follows : In the last letter which I addressed to you, I only heard the words which I reported, that is to say, I did not receive within myself any interior illumination ; whereas, when the Saviour Jesus addressed to me the words I have reported in this letter, there appeared within me, as it were, a spiritual and heavenly light. I saw clearly and distinctly, unless it were an illusion, what I may thus express : There is in France much good and also much evil. If the good were proportionate to the bad, we should not have so much reason to dread the strokes of God's justice, because it would be as much appeased by the good as provoked by the evil committed. Now, it is not so ; the good is less than the evil, and is not sufficient to turn away the vengeance of God. More good is needed. Happily, the Blessed Virgin intercedes for us, and prevents the justice of God from falling on our heads. But Mary desires us to implore her assistance. She places herself between God and us, and awaits our prayers and supplications. Her heart is full of kindness and tenderness. One single word addressed to Mary obtains for us immeasurable graces. God will allow Himself to be appeased if we have recourse to Mary. Mary is a beggar for our prayers, so great is her will and desire to come to our aid. We ought also to have recourse to Mary because it is the will of God and the means of rendering Him favourable to us.

Be pleased to receive, I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my high consideration, with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble and grateful servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 22nd November, 1843.

LETTER XXXVII.

*Our Lord makes known to Marie what is passing in M.
Dupérier's mind.*

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I always tell you everything with simplicity and confidence ; I hide nothing from you, but report to you everything I hear and see.

One day I heard our Lord pronounce these words with inexpressible benignity :—" O Abbé Dupérier, what are your thoughts ? I know your heart, I have penetrated to the very depths of your soul, I know your most secret thoughts. I have considered and examined your conduct ; I have weighed your actions. the good, the indifferent, and the bad, in the scales of My justice. You have an ardent and a sincere love for God, a profound humility, and a rare and high degree of purity of heart. Your knowledge of the science of salvation is great, and your lights are extensive. You observe the law after a perfect manner, and do not fail in any of your duties. Your heart expands before Me with confidence and simplicity ; your spirit rises towards God with fervour ; you banish from your thoughts, not only what is bad, but also all that is vain and useless. Nevertheless, because you are a man, all sorts of thoughts form themselves within you, but you are careful to stifle all that would be culpable as soon as you perceive them, and grace comes to your aid to help you in doing so. The offering of yourself which you make each day to God is very pleasing to Him. My son, receive the testimony which I award you ; it is full of truth.

"Continue, My son, to live after this same manner,

advance ever more and more towards that perfection which has no end. Attach yourself to God more perfectly and more intimately. Let your mind raise itself to still higher things, and become more and more pure by attaching itself more and more closely to Me.

“And now, My son, let us speak a while of the object of My solicitude and your care, My little servant Marie. What do you think of her? Do you believe that she is but a poor girl who is deceived and deluded by the devil? Is she a visionary? Has she an arrogant spirit, which in its pride seeks for self-display? Do you really hold her to be full of extravagant notions? Is Marie one who has always lies upon her lips, and deceit in her heart? Does Marie resemble some persons of her sex who, in spite of their ignorance, flatter themselves that they know everything? Men have said to each other, ‘Let us keep silence, and try Marie in the most sensitive quarter; let us feign to despise what she sees, what she hears, what she experiences within herself; let us, in appearance at least, pay no regard to these things, and observe how she will behave. Will she be as indifferent as ever?’

“Yes, you may keep silence: but cannot I make everything known to her, if it so pleases Me, and show her how I make sport of the designs of mortal men? Cannot I acquaint her with your intentions and motives, so that, sustained by My grace, what you conceive to be most trying ordeals shall be to her only a harmless amusement, and an assured proof of the weakness of man when he would try to contend with the wisdom of God? Have I not said that Marie would not be the dupe of the conduct adopted towards her, and do you think that she does not perceive the judgment formed

of her? Say nothing to her, if you will; if it so pleases Me, I will tell her more than you would ever be able to tell her. She will elude your sagacity by her frank simplicity. I have inspired her with a horror of dissimulation. Faithful to My teaching, what she has said once she will repeat a second time, and a third, and as often as may be necessary. You will never tire out her patience; she will always get the better of you. Put her to the proof in every manner of way, seek out some new plan, and endeavour, if you can, to proportion your trials to her courage.

“My son, be not negligent; take care of My little servant Marie.”

The Saviour Jesus pronounced these words in a tone full of gentleness but at the same time with great majesty.

Receive, I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my high consideration, with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble and grateful servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 27th November, 1843.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Jesus promises Marie an early death.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

The Saviour Jesus made me a promise which I have never mentioned to you. Permit me to-day to acquaint you with it; it concerns my death, which will happen before long. One day, after having

received Holy Communion, the Lord spoke thus to me: "My daughter, you will die young; prepare therefore for death. I warn you beforehand, that you may not be taken unawares. Labour to lay up a treasure of merits for eternity."

I should have wished to know the very day and hour of my death, but I made an inward sacrifice of this satisfaction, and asked Jesus no question. I was then nineteen. Nevertheless I thought within myself, "Suppose it be this very year that I am to die?" The Saviour knew my thought, and said to me, "No, My daughter, you will not die this year; you will live through next year, and will even see the whole of your twenty-fifth year; but you will die before you have completed your twenty-sixth. Therefore, at the beginning and the end of each year, each month, each week, each day, you ought seriously to reflect and say to yourself,—'Another year, another month, another week, another day is gone; another day, week, month, year are beginning which I ought to give to God.' Prepare yourself continually to die by uniting yourself more and more to God, and detaching yourself more and more from creatures and from all earthly things. If you do this your death will be sweet, happy, calm, and peaceful; you will sleep the sleep of the just; and on waking you will see God in Eternity." After saying these words He asked me whether I did not regret dying so young. "Ah, Lord," I replied, "how could I regret dying? Hast Thou not told me that death is a good thing, for that after death a soul offends God no more, but loves Him perfectly, and is united to Him for ever? If so, how could I regret dying?" In fact, Monsieur, the thought that I must die soon, far from making me sad, fills me with joy.

It renders the most painful things easy to me, makes me bear the severest trials patiently, and disengages my heart from everything, even from my family. I love my parents, you know I do,—ah, well, if I were to die this very hour, I could bid them adieu without shedding a tear. I should be so happy to fly far from the tabernacles of sinners ! To die, that is, to renounce everything, to renounce oneself, renounce one's body, in order to go to God—what happiness, what bliss ! Often do I cry aloud with the prophet, “Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged ! my soul groaneth within me at having to dwell so long in the tents of Cedar.” *

I hope for the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise, because I believe His word. Nevertheless, if God should will to prolong my trials, my sufferings, and my tribulations, I would say to Him, “Lord, Thy will, not mine, be done.” If it is sweet to die, it is sweeter still to do the will of God. If it is sweet to dwell with God, and if there is no lot like that, it seems to me that the greatest happiness is to suffer for God and to do His will.

You have oftentimes said these things to me, you have engraved them on my soul. I cast myself at your feet and entreat you to pray for me.

I have the honour to be, Monsieur le Curé,

Your very obedient servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 12th December, 1843.

* Psalm cxix. 5.

LETTER XXXIX.

Our Lord pleads Marie's cause with the Superioress of the Sacré Cœur.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

It is with the utmost confidence that I am about to communicate to you what I experienced on one occasion. You will judge what you think proper of it. I shall regard your decision as the expression of God's will, and humbly submit myself thereto.

I was before the Blessed Sacrament, when I seemed to see our Lord under a sensible form, although with the eyes of my soul. He addressed these words to me :—"My daughter, be of good courage, I am your father, I will protect and sustain you. Yes, Marie, I will lead you as by the hand whither I wish to conduct you. My daughter, you shall be My resting-place ; it is in your heart that I wish to dwell, as in an abode full of delights. I have chosen you for My servant, My spouse, the interpreter of My word to souls, My voice in the wilderness of the world. Rejoice, because from your lips shall proceed an eloquent voice, which from the depths of your solitude shall be echoed throughout the world, calling on pious souls to glorify My Name.

"I destine you to become a religious of the Sacré Cœur. Whatever be the difficulties which may appear to hinder this vocation, they will vanish. These are the words which I shall address to the Superioress of the Nuns of the Sacré Cœur at Paris :—"My daughter, I have regarded you with an eye of complacency, I who am your Lord, the Thrice-Holy God, who have loaded you with benefits and graces. One mark of the

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gratitude which you owe Me for all My benefits is submission to My will and a heart docile to receive the words addressed to you by Him whom you call your Saviour.

“ ‘ Now, I wish to speak to you to-day of your community. You have with you and under your government souls that are pious and fervent. They are truly great in My sight ; they give edification, and by their virtues shed abroad the sweet odour of My grace. There are others that do not profit as they ought by the good movements I impart to them, the examples they have before them, or the care which you bestow upon them. They perform, it is true, the duties which the rule imposes on them ; they obey your injunctions ; but there is in them nevertheless a fund of sluggishness and negligence which may prove most prejudicial to them. ² Be watchful lest any should fall into such a state of tepidity as would deserve that I should cast them from Me. You will detect what I speak of by the manner in which they obey you, and their behaviour under the trials to which you subject them. Watch them for a certain time, and you will perceive the truth of My words. Take heed that sin do not penetrate into your house. Above all, preserve therein peace, harmony, concord, and charity. Your position is great and high, but it imposes on you considerable obligations : do not forget that.

“ ‘ I desire to communicate to you, moreover, something of which you are ignorant, and which will interest you : hearken to Me with attention.

“ ‘ I know, in the diocese of Aire, a young girl who, under an ordinary exterior, simple and homely, and of a station in life which has nothing distinguished about it, possesses a great soul, a soul which I have enriched

with My special graces, a soul which I greatly love. Her family is poor, but it faithfully observes My law. This girl I have chosen from all eternity to operate in her the works of My mercy and My love. On the day on which I permitted her to communicate for the first time, I caused her to experience the sweetness of My presence, and her heart will never lose the remembrance of it. At the age of thirteen I drew her more powerfully towards Me ; I made her drink of the cup of bitterness, to prepare and mould her young heart, of which I wished to make a vessel of election whereby to display the might of My grace. After several years passed amidst tears and sufferings, conflicts, dryness, and sterility, I dispersed the darkness of her mind, enlightening it with the sweetness of My consolations, which inundate and inebriate it with bliss. With My own hand I have cast on this young soil the seed of My word. I have instructed her, after a manner exalted and profound, in all Christian morality and religion. She will bring forth fruit a hundred-fold.

“ ‘The name of this well-beloved of your Saviour is Marie. Distrusting what was taking place within her, not knowing whence came the instructions she was receiving in a sensible manner, and fearing lest it should be the effect of her imagination or of the artifices of the devil, she informed her director of what she experienced. He tranquillised her mind, assuring her that all this could only come from God ; and so she continued to listen to My word.

“ ‘At the age of nineteen I permitted her to have a change of director. She did not fall into the hands of a man who was weak and impressionable, but of one who is reserved and reflective, who searches things to the bottom and examines them closely, that he may

proceed securely and not lead astray the souls he is conducting. At first, the life of Marie astonished him. He observed her attentively, her words, her confessions, her behaviour in church, her manner of dressing. He rightly perceived that there was something mysterious in her. "My daughter," he one day said to her, "I enjoin you to write down everything you have experienced or shall experience, in order that I may be able to point out to you from what source the words which you hear proceed." Marie has written all down from a spirit of obedience. Her writings will be most carefully preserved, and the glory they will bring to God, when they are published in the light of day, will redound on the Congregation of the Sacré Cœur.

"I design her, in truth, to be a religious of your Congregation. I shall send her to you for trial. Test her in every way, as much as you please, and according to your own judgment. If she is obedient and submissive, if you see her always contented and satisfied, if nothing puts her back, you will be well convinced that she has a true vocation. Receive her, be careful of her, notwithstanding her poverty; she will compensate you by her labours, her good conduct, and her piety for the sacrifices you make for her. Receive her just as she presents herself, with whatever she may have, requiring nothing from her family, who are not able to make the sacrifices which, when you receive any one as a member, the family usually imposes on itself. I permit you to send Marie away in disgrace if she does not possess the qualities I have specified.

"My daughter, do not neglect fully to carry out the orders I give you with respect to your Congregation and to Marie; or you will call down upon yourself My

indignation and anger. Go in peace, My daughter ; I bless you.' ”

This is what the Saviour Jesus said. I report His words exactly. He then added, “ Marie, My dear daughter, be sure to hide nothing of this from your director. Tell him it all fully. He will take the more care of you and of your guidance, and I will repay him a hundred-fold whatever he shall have done for you. Abandon yourself to his direction, and strictly follow his injunctions. I will bear you witness before men and before My Father. I will glorify you, and set you on a throne resplendent with glory for all eternity.”

Monsieur, I repeat it once more : think and do respecting this whatever you may judge fitting. I confidently leave it in your hands, submitting beforehand to whatever your wisdom and prudence shall direct.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my highest consideration, with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 23rd December, 1843.

LETTER XL.

Marie's views respecting her writings and vocation.

MONSIEUR,

You have desired me to tell you, according to the lights which I may have received through the voice which speaks to me, what I think of my vocation and departure, viewed in regard to the way in which you have acted, and have been induced by others to act, towards me.

I am going to speak to you with the sincerity and frankness which you know I always do. I have never concealed anything from you ; I have never disguised my sentiments. I should be ashamed to lie or deceive ; God forbids this ; and the gratitude I owe you for the interest you take in me makes it my duty to speak to you always with an open heart.

You reassured and tranquillised me when you told me that you thought that all which I had experienced comes from God. As for myself, that was indeed my conviction from the beginning, that is, at the time you arrived at Mimbaste. Later, seeing that you doubted, I doubted with you, and, to avoid being led astray, I have faithfully told you all that passed within me ; I have never hidden anything from you. My misgivings very much increased when I saw that M. Dup  rier doubted as well as yourself. Oh ! with what suffering and pain was my soul tortured ; above all, when he entertained more than doubts, and thought that I deceived you, and that all my words were lies. My affliction was very great, because I thought that I must be a very wretched sinner, since I could be supposed capable of such behaviour. The Saviour Jesus consoled me after this severe trial, and light has seemed since to return by degrees to my mind.

These, then, are the reflections which occurred naturally to me with regard to the words which I heard and which I repeated in writing. Nevertheless, I did not dwell on these reflections ; I awaited your decision. While I was in the sad perplexity which you know of, and was vainly seeking to learn the truth from the lips of men, I never ceased addressing myself to God to beg Him to enlighten me, or to

enlighten him who directed me. God, no doubt, came to my help, since my thoughts on this subject have been conformable with your decision. I considered the instructions which I had received, in their principle, in their end, and in themselves. Under all these points of view I clearly perceived that they could proceed only from God.

From my infancy I was taught that there was a God, that I must attach myself to Him, that I must adore Him, love Him, and serve Him; and I tried to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him. Now, it was in seeking God and in loving Him that I experienced all that I have stated in my papers and in my letters. In order not to continue to experience it, I must separate myself from God. It is from Him, then, that all has proceeded. Never will I separate myself from Him, unless this God who was made known to me in my childhood, and in whom I have experienced all that I have related, is not the true God, but is rejected by the Church. If it be so, I renounce this God for the God of the Church, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman. I will refuse Him all my adorations, and regard all that He has told me as needing, in order to my belief in it, to be modified by the teachings of the Church. I desire to follow no other leading. But I know very well that there is no other God save the God of my heart, the God whom I know, and whom I love with my whole soul. It is He who has taught me all, it is He who is the principle of all which I have committed to you, it is from Him that I received it. These writings, therefore, must be good, like everything which comes from God.

If I consider them in their end, I still say that they come from God, because the end of these writings is

good ; it would not be so if they came from the devil. What, in fact, is the object of the writings which I have committed to you ? The glory of God, the salvation of my soul, and the salvation of the souls of my brethren. Indeed everything therein speaks of giving glory to God and submitting to His will : everything leads souls to Him, attaches them to Him, and engages them to love and serve Him faithfully.

Finally, consider the writings in themselves. Is it not true that they conduce to the practice of good, and of perfect good ? Is it not true that they draw the soul to God, and inspire a hatred of sin ? Now, can the devil ever produce works of that kind ? We judge a tree from its fruits, the Saviour Jesus said, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruits. How, then, could the devil have suggested to me things so good and so agreeable to God ?

It is thus. Monsieur, that I reasoned, almost without perceiving that I was doing so ; and this reasoning did me good. But as soon as I became aware of the reflections which my mind was making, I turned it away to something else, in order to conform myself in all things to the will of the Saviour Jesus, who has constituted you as my judge and father. I renounced my own views in order to defer entirely to you.

You desire to know what I think about my vocation. My vocation is to become a religious at the *Sacré Cœur*. This vocation is not from myself ; if it were so, it would be no vocation. He who has held converse with me in the depth of His infinite wisdom, with all His ineffable gentleness, sweetness, and holiness, He it is who calls me to the Congregation instituted in honour of His Sacred Heart. I am called, and it is towards this kind of life that I feel

drawn. I am not acquainted with it either in the general or in detail ; it suffices me to know that it is the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I desire to live therein as in my God and Saviour, and to be united to Him ever more and more closely in all the fulness of love. This is my motive for desiring to be a religious ; and it is also the motive for which I am called by the Saviour.

It is, therefore, neither from vanity nor ambition, nor from the hope of leading a pleasant, comfortable, and easy life. No, Monsieur, God knows my sentiments ; they are free from all personal attachment. Trials await me there as here. I shall suffer much ; I know this, for Jesus has told me so ; but I fear neither labours, nor humiliations, nor contradictions, nor sufferings, nor trials of any kind, be they what they may. I fear neither prisons, nor chains, nor death. My ambition is martyrdom, and I shall not be disappointed, for I shall endure a true martyrdom. Let me be praised or blamed, despised or esteemed, honoured or insulted, all is alike indifferent to me ; I desire to render perpetual homage to God by living in the profoundest humiliation of soul, because I am nothing but sin, and God is sovereign perfection. I would willingly strip myself of everything ; I love poverty, and should be content to beg my daily bread. If from the depth of misery I were to be raised to the highest worldly greatness, wealth, and glory, it would not affect me ; and again, if from this height of riches and honour I were to be plunged into the extremist indigence, I should not lose my calmness and tranquillity. I desire only one thing—to love Jesus ; to love Him above everything, to love Him always, to love Him without ceasing. Jesus is everything to

me ; He is my support, my strength, my vigour, my life ; without Him all is as nothing to me, I do not live, I abide in death. Now, that I may attach myself more and more to Him, that I may be one with Him, I must follow the attraction which He has given me. He calls me, and I ought to fly to the retreat to which I am summoned by His will. I feel very strongly that I shall not be able to keep myself in peace situated as I am now, resisting the attraction which He sends me. The life I am living is not life ; neither is it death ; it is an agony more terrible than death.

If such be my vocation, I think that I ought to follow it, and go whither God calls me. I ought to follow it, and that as soon as possible ; and this brings me to speak of my departure. What is there to delay it ? It must be either the necessity of testing me, or your desire to exercise my obedience, or the fear of my encountering dangers on the road, or difficulties as to my admission at the *Sacré Cœur*. Now, Monsieur, have I not been sufficiently tested for more than two years ? Have I not been subjected to the most searching and distressing trials ? No one is better able to judge of this than yourself ; and these trials must, doubtless, have clearly proved to you the solidity of my vocation. I have not a word to say against your desire to test my obedience ; it was your right ; indeed, it was only prudent in you to prove it. But in what have I disobeyed you since I have been under your direction ? As for obedience, I shall also have to pay it elsewhere. I do not desire to be a religious in order to do my own will, but to do that of Jesus, which will be manifested to me by my superioress.

If it be urged that so long as I do the will of my

director I cannot go wrong, I admit this to be true in the ordinary ways of life and in common things ; but in the extraordinary state in which I find myself, without any merit on my part, but solely from the will of Jesus—when I see things in the brightness of the light which God imparts to me—when I clearly discern that my conscience is interested in the matter—I believe that it becomes my duty to follow this light. Let it be proved to me that I deceive myself, that I am in error, that this light is only darkness, I will then submit ; I am submissive now, and my obedience will ever be discreet and reasonable.

But, Monsieur, if you have recognised the intervention of God in my writings, why should you not do so also as regards my vocation and my departure ? Or rather, why should those whose guidance you follow refuse to recognise it, and pertinaciously continue to persuade you not to let me go ? You are bound to use prudence in your dealings with those who are under your direction, but they also are bound to use a corresponding prudence in their relations with their director. Were the case only between you and me, I ought in everything to submit to you ; but, having to deal both with Jesus and with you, does not prudence bid me attend both to your words and to those of the Saviour ?

Ah, do not think that this opinion is the mere result of natural feeling, or that it is dictated by self-love. It is stronger than myself, it is in me, and I know not how, or, rather, I do know : it is in me by the power of the word of Jesus, who operates all that He pleases. I write these lines, as I write all the rest, because you bid me do so ; and I write it as my mind, enlightened by Jesus, dictates it to me. Now, to sum up all in

one word : if God has given me a vocation, it was not in order that it should remain without effect.

I can well understand that you have fears for me, and that others have still greater than you have, on account of my making this journey at my age ; they dread the risks to which I may be exposed. Ah, Monsieur, I can here assure you that, with God's grace, I would die a thousand times rather than ever be guilty of anything that was evil either in words, acts, looks, or thoughts. Life is nothing to me ; the state of grace is everything to me ; to this I would sacrifice my life and all that I have dearest in the world. Besides, I shall know how to mistrust myself and to hope in God. He will be my support and my defender. He watches over me ; who, then, shall seek to injure me ?

In fine, Monsieur, the difficulties in the way of my admission ought not to detain me, or cause my departure to be deferred ; they will always remain the same. You know how Jesus has shown to me that He will remove them all. I confide in His word, and I desire to abandon myself to Him. You will not, I am sure, oppose my departure, and you will pray that the purposes of God with regard to me may be accomplished.

God knows, Monsieur, the reliance I place in you, the respect, the esteem, the veneration which I entertain for you. I have spoken to you in this letter with confidence, and I have done so only because such was your command. Let me kneel at your feet to entreat your pardon ; if there has been anything in my letters which might offend you, it will have been truly against my intention. Allow me also to beg you, for the love of God, to tell me if you sanction my departure. Oh,

how happy I should be if I had your assent joined to that of Jesus ! Oh, speak, my father, and let your word be a word of blessing and of conformity with that of Jesus.

In the meantime I submit myself in all to you, and renew the expression of my most respectful sentiments.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 10th January, 1844.

LETTER XLI.

Jesus reassures Marie as to the difficulties which might arise on the part of her family. Visions of three lakes and of a crowded square.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

It is ever with a filial confidence that I disclose to you all the most hidden secrets of my heart. Notwithstanding all the favours and instructions I have received from Jesus, and all His counsels and injunctions, I am far from being what I ought to be, disengaged from all things and attached only to God. I am not so, but I would earnestly desire to be. Some time ago, I was still more attached to myself and to my family than I am now ; I looked at things much more with the eyes of the flesh than with those of faith. Well,—and the recollection covers me with confusion—Jesus condescended even to seek me in my abject condition in order to draw me out of it.

When He told me that He called me to become a

religious of the *Sacré Cœur*, I was at first filled with joy. But this joy was not of long duration. The thought that came to trouble me was this : I said to myself, "To become a religious of the *Sacré Cœur* I must leave my father and mother, I must have a considerable dowry, I must be introduced and presented by some one ; I could never go to Paris by myself, and get myself taken into the house to which the Saviour Jesus calls me." Then I went on to say to myself, "My father and mother will be unwilling to part with me ; if they give me the necessary dowry, I shall reduce them to poverty ; how, then, can I ever be a religious of the *Sacré Cœur* ?"

It was thus that I looked at the matter with the eyes of the flesh, and thought of it according to the thoughts of the flesh ; it was thus that I leaned on an arm of flesh instead of looking to God, hoping in God, regarding everything with the eyes of faith, and resting entirely on the word of the Saviour Jesus. Ah ! Monsieur, what narrowness of heart, what blindness of mind, what want of faith !

But Jesus came to strengthen me, to raise me up, and make me fix my eyes steadfastly on His mercy. You will see how great was His condescension. He showed me how He would dispose the hearts of my parents, how He would speak to my directors ; He showed me how every obstacle would be removed, and the way for my admission be made easy by His omnipotence ; and He showed me what measures I ought to take myself.

After this, the Saviour spoke no more to me, but I clearly heard, as it were, a secret voice saying to me, "Never trust in men, but trust ever in your Saviour. Look not at life as sinners and unbelievers look at it,

but as do the just and the children of God. Walk according to the will of Jesus, and fear nothing ; He will bring you to the haven."

Allow me now to tell you what Jesus showed me and made known to me respecting the dispositions of my parents.

When I spoke to my family of my determination to become a religious of the *Sacré Cœur* they offered no opposition. Nevertheless, when I witnessed their sorrow I seemed to hear them say, "Ah, Marie, are you willing to forsake us, and to cease to help us at a time when we are advancing in years? What will become of us if all our children leave us?" It was thus I interpreted the feelings of my family: was it the true interpretation? I do not know. When I call to mind their sadness, I believe it to be true; but when I remember their generosity and the willingness they showed to strip themselves of everything in order to provide me with the necessary dowry for entering the *Sacré Cœur*, I believe it to be false. I could not bring myself to accept their proposal. "My daughter," said my mother to me one day, "we will give you a thousand crowns to take to the *Sacré Cœur*, and a thousand francs for your journey. your equipment, and your maintenance until your reception." But I saw that it would be reducing them to a very low condition, and I said to my mother, "You will give me less than that, and nevertheless they will receive me at the *Sacré Cœur*. I will tell them, and besides they will know, that I am poor, and they will not refuse me entrance into the convent." "No, my daughter," rejoined my mother, "however much we may be straitened in means after you are gone, by providing you with this portion, we will bear it bravely, thinking

that it will prevent your being the servant of the others in the convent." *

This is what my poor mother felt. For myself, my thoughts were different about this matter. I did not desire to embrace the religious life for the purpose of living more at my ease, but that I might do the will of Jesus. What does it matter to me that I should be the servant of all, if such be the will of God? Oh, that I may not fly from the Cross in leaving the world, but fasten myself to it with Jesus for my whole life!

I acknowledge, Monsieur, that I much desired to have a calm and peaceful moment for holding converse with Jesus. It was not, as it seemed to me, that I loved my parents too tenderly; I would willingly have left them; but, in spite of myself, I felt deeply pained in my heart at having to reduce them to so much distress by leaving them. Alas! it was because I did not rely sufficiently on the Providence of God.

One day I was making my meditation, I was on my knees before Jesus, and I said to Him, "Lord, Thou seest how sincerely I desire to follow Thy will, and what pain I feel at reducing my family to such straits by leaving them, if I accept the dowry which they wish to give me. O Lord Jesus, take pity on my family and order all things for me. I do not know if my views are just, but I love Thee, O Jesus, much more than I love my parents; say the word, and I will do whatever Thou pleasest." I do not remember

* This was a misapprehension. The position of the religious at the *Sacré Cœur* is determined, not by the portion they bring with them, but by their degree of education. The nuns of the second class—the *Sœurs Coadjutrices*, or *Sisters Assistant*—do all the material work of the house, but they are not regarded as the servants of the other Sisters, who not unfrequently take a share in their labours.

now exactly all I said to Him, but I poured forth my heart into His, like a child, with all sincerity. "My daughter," He said to me, "I love your submission to My will, and I also love your affection for your family. God and your family may both be loved together, provided the love of your kindred does not make you forget what is owed to God. Henceforth, do not be anxious about your family in regard to the portion which they desire to give you. It is My intention that you should not accept it, and that your family should retain what they have. By the absolute power of My will, you will be admitted into the Congregation of the *Sacré Cœur*, not from any interested motive, but out of pure charity. You are poor, My daughter, but let not this distress you: blessed are the poor! they have a mark of resemblance to Me which pleases Me and touches My Heart. I will myself introduce you among My well-beloved daughters of the *Sacré Cœur*." It was thus the Saviour banished this anxiety from my mind; He spoke to me several times in the same manner, and my mind was set at rest.

Here, again, is how He infused peace into my heart with respect to my family's consent; I knew beforehand that it would not be refused me, but nevertheless I was quite aware that it would be granted with pain, and that they would conceal their pain from me in order not to grieve me.

After having communicated I awaited Jesus at the door of my heart; on beholding Him I prostrated myself before Him with the deepest humility. He took me by the hand, and led me close to a lake whose waters were in a violent turmoil. Round the lake I saw a multitude of people of both sexes diverting themselves. Presently they nearly all went to

quench their thirst in the waters of the lake, which contained a countless number of little snakes, which they swallowed with the water. After drinking, far from quenching their thirst, the water seemed to burn them inwardly, for they became as though distracted and were seized with an extraordinary fury, tearing each other to pieces and casting themselves down into the depths below.

Jesus then conducted me across mountains and places so steep that without His help I should have continually fallen down the most frightful precipices. He led me to the margin of another lake, the waters of which were perfectly still. He cast a plank upon the surface, on to which I got, and we speedily reached the opposite bank. At a few paces distant I perceived a third lake, whose pellucid waters were gently agitated by a light breeze, raising little ripples, which shone like crystals sparkling in the rays of the sun. Jesus plunged me into this lake, and I swam in it with ease. It seemed to me as though grace were diffusing itself through my whole being, and I became as resplendent as the waters in which I was immersed. A number of persons hastened to the spot, some of whom appeared to be in a state of holy joy, others in a state of affliction, but full of calm despite the tears they shed. They bathed in the waters of the lake, or quenched their thirst therein, and then withdrew in peace. Jesus did not explain to me what this signified, but I quite understood.

After this, Jesus conducted me to a great gate which seemed to be the gate of a town ; He opened it, and closed it after us. I beheld a great square, and on either side was a multitude which no eye could have numbered. On one side were persons of both sexes

and of every age, class, and condition, coming and going and hurrying eagerly to and fro. On the other side were persons also of both sexes and of every age, class, and condition, gentle, modest, recollected, their hearts and minds raised up to God, labouring according to their several vocations, but calm and tranquil, free from disquietude or distraction. Jesus held me by the hand amongst them, and I saw quite near me my father, mother, and sister. My mother, on seeing me, said in a plaintive tone, "My daughter, why will you desert me? What is it that you want for with us? See in what a state of health you leave me; consider that your father is far advanced in age, and your sister will have to remain alone to bear all the burden and fatigue. My daughter, you will not forsake us." Then Jesus spoke, and said to her, "O woman, to whom do you think you owe your life? to your daughter, or to Me? On which do you lean the most? on her, or on Me? If I require your daughter of you, it is because she does not belong to you, and I have but entrusted her to you for a time. If I claim her again, it is because she belongs to Me. Think you that in taking her from you I wish to deprive you of your necessary subsistence? No; such is not the design of My Providence. I have already taken one of your children, and you have suffered no discomfort. I will take this one also, and My Providence will not suffer you to want for anything. Raise your mind to higher views. How ought you not even to esteem yourself happy in that I have chosen your daughter from among a thousand to be My spouse!"

He then addressed Himself to my father, and said to him, "Father of Marie, make the sacrifice of your

child in a spirit of faith ; do it for love of Me, and I will pour down My blessing on your grey hairs."

Lastly, He addressed Himself to my sister, and said to her, "My daughter Marguerite, think rightly and justly of the choice I have made of your sister. Abandon yourself to My Providence. If I deprive you of your sister's help, it is to give you My own. You will no longer enjoy her support and consolation, but I will Myself be your consolation and support. I have nurtured you in retirement during your childhood and youth, giving you to taste of the sweetness of My love, strengthening you by My grace to endue you with vigour to bear the trials which you are undergoing, and will have still to undergo. My will is that you should remain with your parents to tend them in their old age and infirmities, and to occupy yourself with domestic affairs. You will sanctify yourself in this mode of life, and your crown shall be great in Heaven, if you correspond to My graces and live holily in the retreat which I provided for you from your birth."

When the Saviour had thus spoken to my family, He turned towards me and said, "My daughter, let not the thought of your father, mother, and sister occupy your mind. I will watch over them. They are prepared to let you depart ; therefore bid them farewell." I did what Jesus bade me ; I embraced my father, my mother, and my sister Marguerite, and I went my way. I do not know whither the Saviour Jesus led me, but I found myself among a number of pious and holy persons who were chanting the praises of God.

This, Monsieur, is what I have experienced. From that hour my heart has had more strength, and I await with courage the time of my departure, sighing

for the moment when you will permit me to respond to the call of Jesus.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my sincere gratitude and profound respect.

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 17th January, 1844.

LETTER XLII.

Marie's vocation not dependent on her bishop.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

You have supposed, I believe, that the fulfilment of my vocation must depend entirely on Monseigneur the Bishop of Aire. But it is not so. This is how I have understood, and still understand, the matter.

It is not he, but you, Monsieur le Curé, who are charged with my vocation; all that lies with him is to be its protector. With his powerful patronage, I know that my admission into the Sacré Cœur would encounter no difficulty. But his patronage is not the only means by which my entrance can be facilitated. Neither, indeed, is it an absolute necessity that the bishop should interest himself in the matter, for he is not my director. Should he grant me his protection, he will do what will be pleasing to the Saviour Jesus; but he can refuse it me; he is perfectly free to do so. The realisation of my vocation does not depend on him; it depends on you. You are the spiritual father of my soul; it is you who will have to present or recommend me to the Ladies of the Sacré Cœur; and on your recommendation I shall be admitted.

Receive the assurance of my highest consideration and profound respect, with which I have the honour to be, Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 22nd January, 1844.

LETTER XLIII.

List of books read by Marie.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I will give you here a list of the books which are in our house and of those which I have read.

I have read the Old and New Testament ; a volume containing an abridgment of the Lives of the Saints ; the "Introduction to a Devout Life," by St. Francis de Sales ; "The Christian Doctrine" ; the "Treatise of Joy of a Christian Soul," by the Père Ambroise de Lombez, Capuchin, author of the "Interior Peace" ; "The Imitation of Christ" ; "The Imitation of the Blessed Virgin" ; "The Golden Book" ; "A Paraphrase of the *Salve Regina*" ; "The Picture of Penance" ; "The True Belief of the Church" ; "The Spiritual Combat" ; "Lives of Fathers of the Desert," by the Père Michel Ange Mavin, of the Order of Minims ; eight or nine volumes of "The History of the People of God" ; * "A Historic Treatise on Pro-

* This work was put on the Index and even condemned by the Holy See. It appears, however, that at least three corrected editions were published at Besançon in 1828. The Cardinal de Rohan judged the reading of the work permissible to all classes, in conformity with the answer which was returned by the Roman censors charged with its examination. "Bibliothèque des Ecrivains de la Compagnie de Jesus," by the Père de Backer ; third series. *Note of French editors.*

vidence"; two volumes of Père Bourdaloue's Sermons. All these works were lent me by M. Forbas, my first director.

I have also read a little book of "Meditations for Every Day in the Year"; a little book of "Meditations for Every Day in Lent"; "Think Well On't"; "A Visit to the Blessed Sacrament"; "The Way of the Cross"; "The Month of Mary"; "The Angel our Guide in the Christian Life"; a Paroissien; and another book entitled "Divers Prayers and Instructions." All these last works we have in our family.

You wished to know all the books of piety or instruction which I have read, and I have here mentioned them all.

Be pleased to accept the assurance of my highest consideration, with which I have the honour to be,
Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 23rd January, 1844.

LETTER XLIV.

Sentiments of Marie's family on the subject of her vocation.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

You wish to know how my family behaved when I told them of my vocation, and in what way they regard it. I am going to speak to you quite openly.

Two years ago I communicated to them the design I entertained of responding to the call of our Lord

Jesus Christ by becoming a religious at the Sacré Cœur. You know how happy I reckon myself for having been born of such good and kind parents as mine are ; you know their affection for me, and how my whole family, particularly my sister Marguerite, are pleased to make me the special object of their love. Ah, Monsieur, I perceive well, and I have often perceived, that my departure will sadden my family just because they love me too dearly. But I can assure you that they will offer no opposition to the accomplishment of my vocation. I have heard my father, mother, and sister talking over the loss they were to suffer, and exclaim, "God's will be done !" I have also heard them say, "We might be the cause of Marie's unhappiness by opposing her departure : let her follow her vocation, since God calls her, and be happy." These words penetrated my heart, and I thank God for inspiring my father, mother, and sister with such sentiments.

For this year past, my father has often asked me when I proposed to carry out my intention. Perhaps you will think this strange. Oh, do not imagine that he is in a hurry to get rid of me. No, Monsieur, such are not his feelings. But, seeing me going on living at Mimbaste, he has feared that I might not correspond to my vocation, or that some word of his may have too much impressed me, and induced me to delay the entire consecration of myself to God. I have tranquillised him by telling him that I was awaiting your decision, and that I should go as soon as you gave me permission, after having sufficiently examined my vocation.

My father loves me dearly, but he would rather see me go than remain with him contrary to the will of

God and to my own. My dear kind father loves me much, but he does not love me for himself ; he loves me for God and for myself. He prefers the good pleasure of God and the happiness of his daughter to his own pleasure and his own happiness. I cannot better make you understand the love of my father for his children than by telling you that he cannot bear to be absent from his home for one whole day and night, because, he says, it would deprive him for too long a time of the pleasure of seeing Marguerite and Marie. How many parties of pleasure has he refused for that reason ! His pleasure, his happiness, his satisfaction, his consolation here below, is to see his children and be with them. How he does love us ! I could never explain how much. But his love is generous, disinterested ; above all, it is Christian. He suffers from the thought of parting with me, because I am his child ; but he makes an offering to God of his sorrow with full submission of heart.

My mother is more demonstrative in her grief, but so she is in her resignation ; it is she especially who often exclaims, when by herself, " My God, Thy will be done ! "

My sister Marguerite loves me with the tenderest love ; but I need not tell you this. You know what care she took of me when I was young, when I was wilful ; you know how my sufferings pained her at the time that my soul was harassed with scruples ; you know how she strives in every circumstance to please me, and how united her heart is to mine. Her love will not be less pure than that of my father and mother, and I know her well enough to affirm that she, too, will faithfully join in saying, " My God, Thy will be done."

My family would wish to know the time of my going, in order that they may prepare the things which I am to take with me. They would insist on stripping themselves of all they have to provide me with a suitable portion, and I have much trouble in persuading them that I shall not require any. They have often said to me, "Supposing we had nothing left, we should still have the protection of God ; He would not forsake us." Ah, how much many persons of my age who, like me, have received a call from God have to suffer from their relations, and how I bless God for the good dispositions of mine !

As for me, I have been for a long time fixed in mind regarding my vocation. My resolution is taken ; and it is all the stronger because it is not founded on persuasion, but on the most perfect conviction that such is the will of God. No one knows better than I do myself what passes within me. Also every argument, every representation, addressed to me, every trial to which I may be subjected, will be useless ; nothing will shake me, and people lose their time in putting me to the proof. The strongest trials will find me stronger than them, because it is not through caprice or from any human motive that I wish to be a religious of the Sacred Heart, but solely to follow the will of God. Yes, Monsieur, I am still prepared to suffer everything, so strong is my conviction, and so great is the strength and vigour which it imparts to me ; but however immovable I may be in my resolution, I am not so attached to it as not to know how to endure bravely and generously any delay you may please to impose.

The Saviour Jesus has promised me that this delay shall not be prolonged beyond my twenty-fourth year.

I shall wait and persevere, not in my own strength, but in the strength and grace of the Saviour Jesus. I shall wait, but my expectation will be realised before that date. It will be realised even long before ; I have this hope, nay, almost certainty, in my heart, being convinced that you will be unable to find any reasons for detaining me.

Receive, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my submission to your wishes, and of the profound respect with which I am,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 28th January, 1844.

LETTER XLV.

Disposal of Marie's writings.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

Ever since my mind was tranquillised by the words you addressed to me,* I have been happy amid the numerous trials which I every day experience.

I will now acquaint you with the question which I asked our Lord. "Lord," I said to Him, "now that I have been expressly assured by my director that it is Thou who hast spoken to me and still conversest with me in the sweet relations of the Eucharistic Feast and within my heart, permit Thy humble handmaid to ask Thee what ought to be done with the papers which I wrote according as my memory recalled the words which Thou hadst addressed to me."

* This letter was written after Marie had at length obtained the consent of her directors to her departure for Paris.

“My daughter,” He replied, “I will satisfy you as to this matter. Your director knows well already that the instructions you have received are not solely for yourself. He has himself been taught many things by them which he did not know, and so would others, albeit very learned men, if your papers were placed in their hands, because the instructions they contain are Mine and in Me are treasures of science and of wisdom unknown to the wisest and most learned.

“Now, it is My intention that others should profit by My words. I desire that your writings should be faithfully preserved. Your director shall arrange them according as he shall judge proper, if he has the time, in order to their being printed ; if he cannot do this himself, he shall have the work done by another hand ; but he shall take care to apprise the bishop of the diocese, to whom I commend the matter in a very special manner, whenever it is undertaken.

“If any one asks you why you have written as you have, and why I allowed you to do so, reply that My purposes are secret and unknown, and that I desired to exercise you in obedience, perfect self-abnegation and humility.

“Whether it be your pastor, or his director, who, not having the charge of a parish, might be better able to undertake this work, or any one else, it is My wish that, in order to their publication, your writings should receive the approbation of the bishop of the diocese.

“Your papers and your letters shall be printed separately, and your name affixed to them. Your director shall also furnish the necessary documents for writing your Life, and he who writes it must avail himself at the same time of your papers and letters, which shall be most carefully preserved.

“ My daughter, in speaking thus to you, I know that what I say will not wound your modesty, because My word is Light, and consequently it reveals to you that of yourself you are nothing, and that all you have you have received from Me ; that what has been created has not made itself, but that all comes from the Creator ; it shows you that your writings do not contain your own words, or your own knowledge, but Mine.

“ This is My will.”

I repeat to you, Monsieur le Curé, as exactly as I can the words which were spoken to me. For myself, I submit all fully to your decision. I have no will, no desire ; you will do whatever you please.

Receive the assurance of my highest consideration, with which I have the honour to be, Monsieur le Curé,

Your most obedient and respectful servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 8th February, 1844.

LETTER XLVI.

The voice of the desert and its marvellous effects.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

The Saviour Jesus one day addressed to me these words : “ My daughter, a voice shall be heard in the desert, and echo shall repeat in the distance what that voice has uttered.

“ For the present that voice is feeble, but in time it shall have a shrill and piercing tone, like that of the trumpets which you hear in cities. This voice is as a trumpet fashioned by the hands of a skilful workman.

It is made at first of clay ; later, it will be plunged into molten iron, that it may become stronger and more firm ; later still, it will be dipped in molten silver, that it may become white and burnished ; and, finally, in molten gold, so that it will show like a marvel of beauty wrought by the hand of God. It will be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

“ Many shall hear the sound of this voice. Unhappy beings, sore afflicted, seated on the edge of an abyss and on the point of throwing themselves down headlong in their despair, shall hear the sound of this voice ; they shall arise and dry their tears, because it will console them, and they shall live to bless the Lord.

“ Other wretches, sleeping on the brink of a sea of lethargic slumber, and nigh to being drowned therein, shall hear the sound of this voice ; they shall awake, and flee from the danger, and shall render glory to God.

“ Prisoners, immured in a darksome dungeon and held bound in irons, shall hear the sound of this voice. It will break their chains, open the door of their prison-house, give them sage counsels, which shall serve as terrible weapons against their enemies, and they shall see their adversaries stricken with terror and taking to flight.

“ Many, on learning the fame of this voice, shall come from afar to hear it, and shall return better than they came. To-day it is hidden underground, very few hear it ; but when the Lord cometh, He will disinter it. I behold happier days dawn for generations yet to come. I congratulate them on their happiness, because the hand of the Lord, which has so long a time weighed heavy upon them, grows lighter by degrees. I behold negligent hearts which despise the

graces of God, and these graces have been given to others. I behold the sun shining in places where men do not profit by its beams, and it goes to enlighten other countries which sit in darkness. I behold a wide untilled plain : the father of the family sends hither his labourers to cultivate this land watered with the blood of martyrs. He will load it with benefits, and the more fertile it becomes the more fruit it will produce, and what is over and above will go to those who are in want.*

“ The glory of the Lord is infinite ; His judgments are hidden judgments.”

Such are the words which I heard, and which from obedience I report to you.

Accept, I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my respectful sentiments and sincerest gratitude, with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 13th February, 1844.

LETTER XLVII.

Marie makes over her writings to her director.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I think it has become necessary for me to inform you of my intentions respecting the writings which I submit to you.

When I experience anything, I write it down and communicate it to you. Now, I believe that I have a

* This prediction has reference to the future of France, and her restoration and influence as a Christian nation. Comp. Letter XXXVI.

perfect right to make such use of these writings as I please ; to keep them myself or give them to you. Accordingly, I not only submit them to you but I make you a present of them. I do not constitute you merely their keeper, but their master and possessor. Make such use of them as you would of a thing that belonged to you, having been not only entrusted to you, but bestowed upon you.

I possess nothing else of my own ; and I should esteem myself happy in doing you a pleasure by offering you the only thing which I have at my disposal. Oh, that I could, indeed, present you with something which might recompense you for all you are doing for me ! But, if I cannot, God will do it for me ; and this is what consoles me.

Receive, I pray you, the assurance of my sincerest respect, veneration, and gratitude, with which I am, Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 21st February, 1844.

LETTER XLVIII.

Marie is relieved from all anxiety. Her love of the Cross.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

The numerous difficulties which seemed to rise up on all sides and array themselves against me, to prevent my departure and the realisation of my vocation, and which occasioned me so much sorrow, now distress me no longer, because the Saviour Jesus

has clearly shown me that they will entirely disappear, and that I shall at last be perfectly free to betake myself whither His will calls me.

Now I know that nothing will ever interfere with the designs of God regarding me : neither my directors, nor my family, nor the journey ; neither men, nor devils, nor Hell itself. I feel myself interiorly drawn to be a religious of the *Sacré Cœur* ; and I shall be able to follow the attraction.

Yes, Monsieur, our Divine Master will take me under His protection ; He will lead me, He will guide me, and I shall behold the fulfilment of His promises. I have this assurance in my heart, and my heart will not be deceived ; for He has spoken these words to me : “ My daughter, fear not, I will not forsake you ; I promise you this, and I say it to you in very truth.”

In acting thus, He doubtless desires to make me practise humility, and to win my entire confidence by constraining me to abandon myself to Him without reserve. The words which He addressed to me with such clearness and precision have brought calm and joy to my heart, peace and serenity to my soul. I am joyful, and I am content. I await in patience and submission the moment when I shall be able to follow the line of conduct He has marked out for me, which is full of wisdom and leaves no perceptible danger of any kind.

I may have to undergo humiliations, but I will call to mind the example of our Divine Master, and exercise myself in the virtue of humility. Oh, what joy and content do I experience ! How full of happiness my heart is ! It has made all kinds of sacrifices, and now only awaits the moment for making a true oblation of itself. Yes, it is with joy that I shall take up

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the Cross of the Saviour. It is with joy that I shall look upon myself as an exile upon earth. It is with joy that I shall raise my eyes to heaven, to gaze on my true country there. The Cross shall become the portion of my inheritance, my riches, and my consolation. I shall regard all the ties which bind me to earth as broken by my separation from my family. I shall remember no longer save in God that I have on earth a father, a mother, and two sisters, whom I have abandoned into the hands of Providence. I will lift up my eyes to the Lord, and will say within my soul, "Behold my Father ;" to Mary, and say, "Behold my Mother ;" I will look on creatures, and say, "Behold my brethren and my sisters."

Ah, Monsieur, I entreat you, pray, pray for me.

Be pleased to receive, I beg you, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my entire esteem, profound respect, and lively gratitude, with which I have the honour to be,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 29th March, 1844.

LETTER XLIX.

Marie informs her director of her intended departure.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

May I venture to tell you that on the 21st of this month I leave for Paris? But you know that it is only to obey the will of God, to advance more and more in the light and in the path which leads to Heaven, to follow the strong attraction which con-

sumes me, that I go to ask an asylum in the house of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Before leaving you, I ought and I desire to entreat you, for the love of God, to forgive me all the trouble I may have caused you, and to ask pardon for me of him who directed me conjointly with you ; for I feel that I am not worthy myself personally to address him.

Before leaving you, I ought and I desire to thank you both for the good and charitable counsels you have given me and for the patience with which you have guided me. Allow me to beg your remembrance daily before the Lord of a poor sinner like me, who can but abandon herself into the hands of Providence and earnestly implore the charity of the faithful servants of God. Yes, beseech that tender Father not to forsake me, but to grant me His protection to my life's end.

Accept my farewell until we meet again in a blessed eternity, and at the same time be pleased to receive the assurance of my sentiments of esteem, veneration, and gratitude, which will never be effaced from my heart.

I am, with the deepest respect,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

MIMBASTE, 15th April, 1844.

LETTER L.

Marie's journey from Dax to Bordeaux.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

I hasten to fulfil my promise of letting you

have tidings of me. I will tell you everything and omit nothing : forgive me if I am too minute.

At the moment of parting, when I heard my poor father's sobs and saw my sister's tears, I was greatly moved, and I also wept. Nevertheless, we all showed a good courage, and thus we bade each other farewell. Victoire * went with me a little further. When she had left me, I felt myself alone in the world, without either relatives or friends. Henceforth, I looked upon myself as a stranger here below, and threw myself with utter abandonment on the bosom of a most merciful God.

I went to see the good Monsieur Dupérier,† and slept at the house of Madame C——, whom you know.

In the morning, I assisted at the seven o'clock Mass, to commend myself to Jesus, and at ten took my place in the *diligence*. I observed a gentleman get in after me ; I did not look to see whether he were young or old : he was a stranger, and that was enough. For some time neither of us spoke ; he took a book to read, and so did I. After reading awhile, we talked ; from what he said I was aware that he had not formed an ill opinion of me. I replied frankly to his questions. He was a Captain and had seen thirty years' service. Until we reached Mont-de-Marsan we continued to talk at intervals. He must have had more respect and esteem for me than I deserved, for he was very civil, and when he alighted at Mont-de-Marsan he wished me a pleasant journey with much politeness.

* A young girl of the village, who had been Marie's intimate friend from her childhood.

† She means on reaching Dax, where the Abbé Dupérier was director of the Grand Séminaire.

For an hour or two I was quite alone. What a happiness ! I chanted Psalms with all my might, and certainly no one could hear me. This soon came to an end : two men got in, one of them young. He impressed me unfavourably, and I had a distrust of him. I believe he was a young profligate, but I felt neither fear nor alarm ; I trusted in God. They remained silent, and I read my book as long as I could see.

When night came on the young man profited by the darkness to attempt some freedoms. I pushed him away vigorously, saying to him in a tone of grave displeasure, "Have done, Monsieur." After that, he never stirred, and got out at the next stage. Another took his place, but he was reserved and well-behaved. All this had no disturbing effect on my mind. I say it in all sincerity and to the glory of God. I was among these people just as if they were not there. My heart enjoyed a profound peace, and I felt the grace of God abundantly inundating my soul. I owed all this to the fervent prayers which have been offered for me.

After travelling all night, I reached Bordeaux at four o'clock. The conductor had the kindness to take me to the hotel, where I am at this moment, very quiet, and in a very nice room.

That same morning I visited the Cathedral ; a young girl showed me the way. Not liking to detain her for all the time I wished to remain, I dismissed her after remunerating her for her trouble. I heard several Masses, and looked into another church near the hotel. But what trouble I had to find my way back ! If I did not lose my way there, I shall never lose it anywhere. I asked for the Rue Maucret ; but no one knew it : the Rue du Chapelet ; but no one

knew that any better. Then I inquired for the Rue Sainte Catherine, and all did their best to point out the way to it. At last, by dint of inquiring, I got back to Madame Bardeux, who keeps the hotel.

I find everybody here very civil and obliging. The *postillon*, to whom I gave a small fee, promised to let me know when it was time to leave for Paris. I would willingly have postponed my departure until the 25th, in order to travel in company with some nuns who would be on their way from Bayonne to Paris. But I was told that I might reckon myself fortunate in being able to secure a place to-day, as there were more travellers than seats in the *diligence*. God has protected me as far as Bordeaux, and He will take the same care of me to Paris.

Will you be so good as to give this news of me to my family and to the good Victoire? Tell them I am very well and very happy.

Accept, I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Your very humble and very grateful servant,

MARIE.

BORDEAUX, 22nd April, 1844.

LETTER LI.

Marie's journey from Bordeaux to Paris.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

Here I am, arrived at Paris to-day, the 25th of April. My journey was long but a prosperous one. I left Bordeaux at ten o'clock on the morning of the 23rd. I was more favoured than on going from Dax

to Bordeaux. I had the company of a lady who was on her way to Paris; I sat opposite to her, so that we were able to converse during the journey. She was very kind to me, and, indeed, played quite a mother's part by me.

On reaching Paris I went straight to my sister's. * The Superioress and all the Sisters have lavished every attention on me, and continue to show me sensible proofs of their friendliness by their sweet and gracious behaviour. I have been twice already to try and see Monsieur l'Abbé Dupanloup, † at the Little Seminary of St. Nicholas. He admits persons to audience usually twice a week, on Thursdays and Saturdays. On the last occasion I waited nearly an hour, but at the very moment I was about to see him he was called away I do not know where. Seeing my disappointment, the porter asked me whether I would like to speak to the Director of the Seminary. I concluded he was a great personage, so, being tired of waiting for the Abbé Dupanloup, I replied in the affirmative.

The Director looked much surprised at what I told him, and even a good deal embarrassed: this I quickly perceived. All he said was that Monsieur l'Abbé Dupanloup was very much occupied, and would not be able to attend to me. He added that what I had best do was to go and speak to the Ladies of the Sacré Cœur, although he very much doubted their consenting to receive me. I replied that, such being the case, I did not wish to add to the occupations either of the Abbé Dupanloup or of himself, and that

* Her sister Quitterie was a Sister of Charity at the Foundling Hospital, the *Enfants Trouvés*, in the Rue d'Enfer.

† Subsequently illustrious as Bishop of Orleans.

I relied on Divine Providence to take care of me. We parted very civilly.

Far from being disheartened by what had just passed at the Seminary of St. Nicholas, I proceeded at once to the *Sacré Cœur*, and asked to speak to Madame the Superioress. That lady being ill, I saw her substitute.* Ah, Monsieur, how kind she is! I spoke to her with great confidence; I gave her a short account of my life, I told her of my vocation, and explained how I was situated. She asked me my age, how long it was since I had known my vocation, and whether I enjoyed good health. She then remarked that it was scarcely to be expected that at my age I should be able to undertake the education of others, since I should first have to educate myself, and that it would be better for me perhaps to enter some other Congregation. "Ah, Madame," I rejoined, "I would prefer being a lay-sister or a servant in your house to being a nun in any other convent." She told me that all were nuns alike at the *Sacré Cœur*; that those who had education were employed in instructing youth, and that the others were occupied in the domestic work of the house. Seeing me determined to enter the *Sacré Cœur*, she went on to say that she could not at once give me a decisive answer, but that I must first write to you, and beg you to send me in writing your opinion of me, for that this was indispensable to my admission; and that I must, besides, address myself to one of the Fathers of the Company of Jesus in order that he might examine

* The *Mère du Boisbaudry*. The Superioress of the Paris house was Madame de Grammont, the Superioress General being Madame Barat.

my vocation. She mentioned several, but specified in particular the Père Cagnard.

I was much touched by this lady's extreme kindness. I augur well from this gracious and friendly reception ; I am quite in spirits and full of joy. I hope that all is going on well, and will turn to the glory of God and the welfare of my soul.

I hope, Monsieur, that you will not let me wait long for the required letter of information.

Do not be uneasy on my account while I am awaiting my reception at the Sacré Cœur ; I find plenty to do at the *Crèche*, of which my sister has the charge. I shall know how to employ myself and not remain idle.

Pray for me, I entreat you, and beg God to grant me ever His holy protection. Have the goodness to present my most dutiful respects to Monsieur Dupérier, and give my love to all my family : remember me also to my dear good companion.

Be pleased to receive, Monsieur le Curé, I pray you, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Your very humble and most grateful servant,

MARIE LATASTE.

PARIS, 74 RUE D'ENFER,
25th April, 1844.

LETTER LII.

Marie writes to the Père Cagnard.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

You have begged me to let you know everything that relates to my admission into the Sacré Cœur ; I

am sending you a copy of the letter which I wrote to Monsieur the Chaplain * of the Ladies of the Sacré Cœur. I have already told you that Madame du Boisbaudry advised me to go and see him, but I wished to give him some knowledge of me before doing so ; accordingly I wrote to him as follows :—

“The first thing I have to say, is to pray you to take pity on me for the love of Jesus Christ. Ah, Monsieur, take pity on me, I beg. I am a young person entirely in the hands of Providence. I implore with humility and confidence the help of God and of your charity. I feel that I am here on earth only to do the will of God and to save my soul ; and, humbly kneeling at your feet, I assure you that this is my ardent desire. Yes, Monsieur, I desire to save my soul at any price and whatever it may cost me. This is my object in addressing you, in the hope that you will be pleased to assist me in fulfilling this resolution.

“No doubt, you are at a loss to know whence I come, and who and what I am.

“I do not belong to Paris, but grave motives of conscience have induced me to come to this city, and the principal motive is to endeavour to learn what I really am. I need light to know myself thoroughly, and this light I have not as yet found.

“All I know of myself is, that I am nothing but a poor sinner, whom the Saviour Jesus has loaded with His benefits, and whose heart’s desire it is, by dedicating herself to Him eternally, to render Him love for love.

“I am a poor uneducated girl. For three or four

* This was a mistake on Marie’s part. The Père Cagnard was not the regular Chaplain of the nuns.

years the Saviour Jesus has spoken to me and has taught me to know His love, His religion, the virtues He loves, and the duties of every soul that desires to give itself to Him. At first, in order to ascertain with certainty whether what I experienced came from God, from my own imagination, or from Satan, my director obliged me to write down everything I heard and saw ; and out of obedience I did so.

“After strictly examining me, and guiding me with a charity beyond all expression, he became assured that God was calling me to a kind of life respecting which he felt that he did not possess sufficient lights for directing me ; that the Saviour was undoubtedly inviting me to the religious state, and that such was the firm and unalterable will of the Divine Master ; accordingly, he recommended me to follow the attraction which was drawing me to the *Sacré Cœur* at Paris, into which I desire to enter.

“It is in order to follow this vocation that I have come a distance of more than six hundred miles all by myself, but under God’s protection. I addressed myself to the venerable Superioress of the *Sacré Cœur*, who received me with kindness and advised me to go and see you.

“Your charity will allow me to present myself before you, and to entreat you by word of mouth, as I am now doing in writing, to take pity on me, and, after having questioned me, to assist me in gaining admission into the *Sacré Cœur*.

“I have the honour to be,” etc.

Such was the letter I wrote to the *Père Cagnard*. I hope it will meet with a good reception, and that God will employ him as an instrument to facilitate my

entrance into the retreat to which the Saviour Jesus calls me.

You will understand, Monsieur, how more than ever I need your prayers. I commend myself to you, and entreat you to intercede with God for me.

I am, with the deepest respect, Monsieur le Curé,

Your very humble servant,

MARIE.

PARIS, 28th April, 1844.

LETTER LIII.

Marie's admission into the Convent of the Sacré Cœur.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

If I have delayed writing to you till this moment, it is because I wished to tell you something decisive. I am admitted to the Sacré Cœur, where I am to enter without delay. I will now give you a simple account of all that has occurred.

You are aware that, not having succeeded in seeing M. l'Abbé Dupanloup at the Little Seminary of St. Nicholas, I had to go away twice, no further advanced than I was before. So I followed the advice which was given me at St. Nicholas, and went to see the Superioress of the Sacré Cœur, who recommended me, as I have already told you, to apply to the Père Cagnard. On returning to the *Enfants Trouvés*, I told my sister what I had done, who did not approve of it. Nevertheless, she went with me on the 28th to the house of the Reverend Jesuit Father. Oh, what a man! He must certainly unite great discernment with large experience, for a few words sufficed to make him compre-

hend everything. He asked me a few questions, to which I replied, and this was all that was needed to enable him to understand my state. By the effects he judged of the principle from which they proceeded. He saw no obstacle to prevent my entering the Sacré Cœur, and even gave me a letter to Madame du Boisbaudry, to whom I had spoken because Madame the Superioress was ill.

On the 29th my sister also accompanied me to the Sacré Cœur when I went to present Père Cagnard's letter. Madame du Boisbaudry told us she would give the letter to Madame the Superioress, who would write to us. This was on the Monday; the next day she wrote to ask me to go and see her, that she might communicate to me the reply of Madame the Superioress.

On the Wednesday I went to the Sacré Cœur. Madame du Boisbaudry took me into a nice little room, which is more private than the other parlour. She asked me to give her fuller information; I saw that I must enter into more intimate details, so I spoke to her quite openly. "Well, then," she said to me, "return to the Père Cagnard and tell him that Madame de Grammont, the Superioress, is willing to receive you." The Père Cagnard told me that this was also his desire, and that he would speak to Madame the Superioress General at Conflans.

I was sent a second time to the Père Cagnard, that he might examine me afresh, and to beg him to assist me with all his influence at Conflans. The Jesuit Father asked me if I had anything more to add to what I had said to him. I answered in the negative, except that I would be quite submissive and obedient, and that I would certainly never give him occasion to

repent of the interest he had been pleased to take in my behalf.

He has now been to Conflans, where he passed three or four days. On the 10th I went to him again. He had seen Madame Barat, the Superioress General, who consented to receive me, as did also Madame de Grammont.

Bless, I pray you, Monsieur, the Providence of God, which protects me in so sensible a manner. I had cast myself into Its arms with the confidence of a child, and It has shown me the love and tenderness of a mother; It has led me by the hand, and I may say that It alone has done all of Itself, by enlightening the minds of some and inclining the hearts of others in my favour. Pray for me, that I may cleave to the will of God, and that He may grant me the grace to fulfil it in the most faithful manner possible.

I cannot give you any account of Paris. Paris is to me like Mimbaste. However, I have visited the Church of Notre Dame des Victoires* and the church in which repose the relics of St. Vincent de Paul. I also assisted once at Holy Mass in the chapel of the Ladies of the Visitation, which is close to their house.

I do not expect you to send me any answer, but if you are so good as to write to me, you may address

* So celebrated on account of the establishment by the Abbé Dufriche-Desgenettes of the Archconfraternity of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the marvellous results that followed.

Marie would be naturally attracted to the church attached to the convent of the Visitation, the Order to which belonged the Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, whom our Lord commissioned to propagate the devotion to His Sacred Heart.

The relics of St. Vincent de Paul are in the Church of Saint Lazare.

your letter to the *Enfants Trouvés*, and, if I am no longer there, as is probable, my sister would forward it to the Sacré Cœur.

I am very well, and the time does not hang heavy on my hands.

Have the goodness to present my dutiful respects to M. l'Abbé Dupérier and commend me to his fervent prayers. For myself, I do not forget either of you before God a single day.

Be pleased to accept, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my profound respect and sincere gratitude.

I have the honour to be

Your very humble servant in the Lord,

MARIE LATASTE.

PARIS, 12th May, 1844.

LETTER LIV.

Marie at the Novitiate House of Conflans.

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

The sentiments of esteem, respect, and gratitude which I feel for you, and which will never be effaced from my heart, constrain me to break a long silence, and tell you how I find myself in my new position.

I entered the Sacré Cœur at Paris on the eve of the Ascension. Twenty days afterwards I was sent to the Novitiate at Conflans. I am happy and contented: that is all I find to say to you. I am alike confused at the kindness with which I am treated and the charity with which my continual, though involuntary, failings in practising the rules are en-

dured. Ah ! Monsieur, I wish to be very docile, very obedient, and to testify my gratitude to God and to my superiors by the most entire submission. I will submit my will to that of God ; He shall do with me what He pleases ; He is my father and my mother, and I pray Him to treat me as a thing that belongs to Him.

I have placed all my confidence in the Lord, and He has sheltered me under His protecting wing ; He has taken me by the hand and led me into His house, after shielding me from every danger. O my God, what gratitude do I not owe Thee ! Help me, Monsieur le Curé, to thank Him, for the sentiments of my heart do not suffice. When I think thereon I feel my fervour rekindle, I offer to God the sacrifice of all my inclinations and all my desires, but I can only say to Him these words, " My God, do with me what Thou pleasest."

I hope to be penetrated more and more with the spirit of the sublime and holy state which I desire to embrace, in order that I may accomplish all its duties. Pray for me that I may become a religious agreeable to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Have the goodness to present my dutiful respects to M. l'Abbé Dupérier, and give my love to my family. Remember me also to my excellent friend Victoire.

I end my letter as I began it, by repeating that I am happy, and that all my happiness consists in accomplishing the will of God. I thank you also for your exceeding kindness to me ; I shall never forget it.

Be pleased to accept the assurance of my most profound respect and sincerest gratitude.

Your very humble and unworthy servant,

MARIE LATASTE.

CONFLANS, 8th July, 1844.

LETTER LV.

*Marie's letter to her friend Victoire.**

DEAR VICTOIRE,

I cannot despatch this letter without putting in it a little note for you. I have very often thought of what you said to me, before I left for Paris, on the happiness of living in religion; and every day I say in my heart, "She was quite right."

Whatever be the pains, the sorrows, the tribulations of life, it is happiness to be in an assemblage of holy souls which think only of God and love Him only; there one is always consoled, always encouraged, always sustained.

And you, dear Victoire, how do you get on now that you are far away from your friend? How fares it with you? Will you ever see your own hour arrive—that hour when you will say to me, "At last I come to rejoin you"? As I think of it, I feel my tears flow, and I give them free course in the love of my God, the source and bond of our friendship.

Let us both pray the Lord to make our union everlasting, if not here below, at least in our true country, where we shall see God.

My good Victoire, my spiritual trials have now ceased; my soul is in peace and calm; it is a happiness to tell you this. Courage and confidence, my dear friend; let us hope always in the Saviour Jesus.

Adieu. I embrace you a thousand times and as tenderly as I love you.

* This letter was enclosed in the one to the Abbé Darbins of the same date.

As long as life endures, I am, in the Holy Hearts of
Jesus and Mary,

Your devoted friend,

MARIE.

CONFLANS, 8th July, 1844.

LETTER LVI.

*Marie assures her director of her happiness at the
Novitiate.*

MONSIEUR LE CURÉ,

What a pleasure it is to me to be able this time to offer my greetings and good wishes for the new year as a member of the Society to which I have the happiness to belong. In this new position, my soul, animated with those sentiments of esteem, respect, and gratitude which it has always entertained for you, has addressed to the Lord its humble prayers and supplications that He will be pleased to impart to you the salutary effects of His infinite mercy and goodness.

O Monsieur le Curé, how good is our God ! Everlasting glory, love, and thanksgiving be rendered to Him for all the benefits which He has lavished, and still continues to lavish, upon me ! Love Him, thank Him, for me ; my heart is not sufficient for it, nor would the longest and most fervent life suffice ; but, with the help of Thy grace, my God, I will devote eternity to it.

Forgive me if I commence my letter with this free outpouring of my heart. You know better than any one the sincerity and simplicity of my soul ; my confidence in you is still the same, and still, as ever, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

I was sorry to hear of your indisposition. The Christmas festival must have brought you many fatigues, but I am sure you willingly accepted them ; you were labouring for the salvation of souls and to win hearts to the Saviour Jesus. Blessed are such toils !

It was a great pleasure to be assured by you of the good dispositions of the dear people of Mimbaste. If only you could succeed in banishing human respect from that parish, how still more abundant would be the harvest ! I have good hopes that your untiring zeal will succeed in doing this, and that God, in thus blessing your labours, will fill you with consolation.

Be so good as to present my dutiful respects and grateful acknowledgments to the very worthy and venerable M. Dupérier. Tell him I continue happy and contented, and that the better I know my vocation the more I love it.

How goodly a thing it is to live in community where there is but one heart and one soul, all united in the one desire to love God, and serve Him faithfully ; where we have good examples continually before our eyes, and hear the words of fire which proceed from the mouths of our most worthy mothers ; where everything, in fine, even to our very recreations, is calculated to enkindle and maintain fervour !

As a young novice, I aspire with the sincerest desires of my heart after religious perfection. I am as yet very far removed from it, but no matter : with the aid of grace, I do not despair of attaining to it, and our Lord will certainly not refuse me His grace. For, indeed, He has not led me here merely to cover me with a veil and a mantle, but that I may practise virtue more perfectly. I remember well His exhortations, and also yours. I will attend to them to the

best of my ability, and to this end I recommend myself to your powerful prayers.

I must now conclude and leave you, but every day we meet in the adorable and most sweet Heart of Jesus.

Be pleased to accept, I pray you, Monsieur le Curé, the assurance of my profound respect and warmest gratitude.

I am, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

MARIE.

CONFLANS, 2nd January, 1845.

LETTER LVII.

Marie begs her sister Marguerite to unite with her in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

DEAREST SISTER,

I cannot tell you all the pleasure which your good letter gave me. It was full of consolation to my heart, as showing the graces which the Lord bestows upon you, and that you understand the necessity of walking more and more in the paths of virtue.

I am sure that amid all your troubles you are happy in being able to go frequently and seek at their source those divine consolations you know so well, but which worldly souls know nothing of. Those souls seek their consolation in frivolities, but they do not find it; they remain ever far removed from true happiness. They think us unhappy having God alone: but is not God alone the sole joy, the sole happiness, of our souls?

Let us unite, my sister, in blessing and loving more and more the Adorable Heart of Jesus, so little known and so little loved, you in the world and I in the Society specially consecrated to It. What an honour to be united to that Heart, the sanctuary of all the virtues, that Heart which constitutes the bliss of the saints in Heaven, and is the refuge, the stay, the strength, the consolation of souls on earth !

Have the goodness to present my dutiful respects to M. le Curé of Mimbaste, and commend me to his prayers, above all when he is offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Remember me to Victoire, and to all my relations and acquaintances.

Adieu. I embrace you with all my heart, and am, as long as life endures, in the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Your most devoted sister,

MARIE LATASTE,

Novice of the Sacré Cœur.

RENNES, 12th July, 1845.

LETTER LVIII.

Marie informs her family of her new position at Rennes.

DEAREST PAPA,

It is with very great pleasure that I avail myself of this spare moment to give you some tidings of myself. The Lord, who disposes everything according to His will, has made me quit the life of retirement which I led at the novitiate to engage me in one

rather more active ; for I have been sent to Rennes, where one of our houses is being founded.

On the 4th of May six of our number left Conflans for Rennes, where we found one of our sisters who had come from elsewhere. At first our community was composed of seven persons, but we hoped the Lord would vouchsafe to increase it ; and we have not been disappointed : to-day we are ten in number.

The situation of our abode, which is just outside the town, is very agreeable. In front of the house is a pretty plantation of plane-trees and limes, and on the side a large field with an avenue of chestnut-trees and a bushy hedge of horn-beam. The walls being very old, it has been necessary to make large repairs, and every day we have several workmen employed.

I am greatly pleased with this country ; these good people are truly devout ; I have observed several men wearing the scapular.

I will conclude, dear Papa, by offering you all the sentiments of respect, gratitude, and affection which are in my heart and which I shall cherish to the end of my life.

I embrace you, and mama also, with a most filial tenderness, and am, in the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Your very humble and devoted daughter,

MARIE LATASTE,

Novice of the Sacré Cœur.

RENNES, 12th July, 1846.

LETTER LIX.

Marie explains to M. Dupérier the constitution of the Sacré Cœur, and assures him of her happiness.

MUCH RESPECTED SIR,

Your letter has made an impression on me which it is difficult to express. I feel quite confounded at your having deigned to remember me, for I do not deserve it.

I will try and answer the questions you put to me.

Your letter shows me that you are not well acquainted with the Sacré Cœur. The Sacré Cœur consists of Religious or Choir Nuns, and Sister-Assistants. The former are employed in the education of youth, the latter in the domestic work of the house. This difference between us is purely exterior; we are all sisters in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and form but one heart and one soul in that Adorable Heart. The Sacré Cœur is a body whose members in their several offices all labour for the same end, which is the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the promotion of Its worship, and the salvation of souls. It is a well-constructed choir, whose voices, taking different parts, form together a melodious concert. We have all the same rule, and she amongst us who knows most intimately the Heart of our Lord, and lives the most holily, is the one who is working the most efficaciously to fulfil the end of her vocation.

I am a Sister-Assistant. My employments, for in each foundation there are several offices, are various according as necessity requires. I am portress, infirmarian, refectarian, lamplighter, seamstress, sweeper. In all these several employments I have enough to

occupy me from half-past four in the morning till half-past nine at night. Pious exercises also occupy a part of my day.

At the *Sacré Cœur* we have all plenty of work, but the rule is not very severe, because we have need of our strength to labour for the glory of God; however, it none the less puts nature to death by crucifying self-love, when faithfully observed in every point.

You wish to ask me several questions. Ah, Monsieur, I guess what you desire to know. It will suffice to tell you that God has led me by the hand in all circumstances. I have placed all my hope in Him, and it has not been deceived. You know how He opened to me an entrance into the *Sacré Cœur*, and I have nothing more to add on this subject. I am here in the place of my soul's repose and tranquillity, in that Heart, so loving, of the Saviour Jesus. He conducts me by a way which He has indicated to me, and which, I hope, I shall never leave. To lead a humble, hidden, obscure, unknown life, to live for God in Jesus Christ,—this is what has been designed for me, and it suffices me. There are troubles everywhere, sufferings everywhere; but God has had regard to my good-will, and in His goodness to me has changed the thorns into flowers.

It is needless to describe to you all the happiness which I taste in my new life, for I can say all in one word: my heart is happy; it regrets nothing, and desires nothing but what it possesses. I am happy; I have found, and I every day find, happiness at the foot of the Cross and in the Adorable Heart of Jesus. I am happy, and my happiness is that of every soul which lives in religion,—Jesus and the Cross of Jesus. You will understand me when I say that is enough

for me ; all the rest is little in my eyes ; all the rest, indeed, is nothing to me.

You ask me to pray for you, and I will do so with pleasure. I will beg the Amiable Heart of the Saviour to manifest Itself to you in a very special way, with all Its beauty and Its sweetness, and inspire you with a tender devotion to It, so that, possessed therewith yourself, you may be able to communicate it to others.

I will ask you to be so good as to unite yourself to us on the first Friday of each month in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, because on that day, which is consecrated thereto, we honour the Adorable Heart of Jesus in a very special manner.

It is time I should finish my letter ; I began it a week ago : for since I have been infirmarian I have not had a moment's leisure.

May all turn to the greater glory and love of God. The glory and love of God are my consolation, my support, my desire, my Heaven, my life, my all : everything else is nothing to me.

Receive, Monsieur, the assurance of my profound respect, with which I am, in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

SISTER MARIE LATASTE.

RENNES, 21st November, 1846.

LETTER LX.

Marie replies to an inquiry on the part of M. Dupérier, and tells him that she is being led by a new way.

MUCH RESPECTED SIR,

In the letter you wrote to me you expressed a

N *

desire to know if it were contrary to our rules to receive such letter and others of the same character which you might address to me. I have spoken on the subject to my very worthy Mother Superioress. She told me in reply that there was nothing in this opposed to the spirit of our rules, and that it might even furnish us with an opportunity to fulfil a duty of our vocation, which is to contribute, by the prayers asked of us, to the good works done or undertaken by others for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. But she gave me to understand at the same time that letters of mere personal gratification were contrary to the spirit of our Congregation. She was so good as to say further that she would unite her prayers to yours.

In order to answer every point in your letter, permit me to add that our Lord has changed nothing in respect of His goodness towards me, although He has altered His mode of dealing with me. There is no longer anything either doubtful or of the sensible order in His relations with me : the way by which He leads me is a simple and common way, wherein I enjoy the deepest peace. I will pray for you with all my heart. There is nothing else which I can do.

I thank you for the interest you take in my family, and I beg you to receive the assurance of the profound respect with which I am,

Your very humble servant,

SISTER MARIE LATASTE,

Novice of the Sacré Cœur.

RENNES, 30th April, 1847.

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